

THE
CONGREGATIONAL UNION
JUBILEE LECTURES
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JUBILEE LECTURES.

JUBILEE LECTURES:

A HISTORICAL SERIES

DELIVERED ON THE OCCASION OF

THE JUBILEE

OF THE

Congregational Union of England and Wales,

WITH AN

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

VOLUME I.

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PREFACE.

THE Lectures contained in these Volumes were delivered in London — and, in some instances, re-delivered in other places—at the request of the Committee of the Congregational Union of England and Wales. Their delivery was part of a scheme adopted by the Union for signalizing the fiftieth year of its existence by an effort to promote a knowledge of the principles for which Congregationalists contend, and to show, by illustrations drawn from English history, the place those principles have held in the religious and political life of the English people. The Lectures, though prepared for oral delivery, are published in the belief that they are not unworthy of a place in the permanent apparatus of Congregational Church teaching.

The Introductory Chapter by Professor Fairbairn was not delivered as a lecture, but was prepared at the request of the Committee after the Lectures had been delivered.

There has been no attempt made to give completeness, either apologetic or historical, to the Volumes. The Lectures were prepared without concert on the part of the lecturers, and without editorial hint as to any didactic or polemical use to which the subject-matter of the several Lectures might be turned. Certain well-marked epochs in the history of religion in England, and certain pregnant historical events, were selected, and the lecturers were left free to deal with them as their own

convictions or cast of mind might determine. Nor has there been any censorial handling of the Lectures since their delivery. The candid reader will feel that as the lecturers did not regard themselves as parties to the composition of a work of historical art, the collected Lectures should not be judged by the rules of historical proportion or perspective; but that each lecturer should be held responsible only for his individual work.

The lecturers will be found to have been true to the spirit of the movement which called forth their labours. That movement contemplated no offensive action in regard to other forms of Church polity. It did not seek to make converts. The Union desired that those who are connected by ties more or less intimate with Congregational Churches should be well instructed in all that concerns the Church, as well as in all that concerns the gospel of Christ; but it had no wish to turn the grateful emotion which the retrospect of the last fifty years of Congregational Church-life in England and Wales had evoked into polemical channels. It was inevitable that in the expository statement or historical illustration of Congregational principles there should be an implied rejection of some of the principles on which the highly-organized Churches are founded; but such incidental out-croppings of dissent from the "way" adopted in other Communion, whose status as churches and whose Christian work are yet frankly and thankfully recognized, cannot with candour be interpreted as revealing either the temper of the sectary or the aim of the proselytizer.

The Committee hopes that the Volumes will serve the end for which they have been prepared.

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*ECCLESIASTICAL POLITY
AND THE RELIGION OF CHRIST.*

BY

A. M. FAIRBAIRN, D.D.

Contents of Introductory Chapter.

Churches should be studied through their distinctive ideals—The Congregational ideal—Meaning of the terms “Congregationalism” and “Independency”—Church polities fall into two classes, the Monarchical and the Republican—These polities brought face to face with the religion of Christ—Contrast of Catholicism with the religion of Christ—Offices of the Apostolic Church—The Divine right of episcopacy abandoned by English scholars—The Apostolic the simplest and least organized of societies—The rise of the papal system traced—The effect of the changes involved in the development of the sacerdotal system on the religion of Christ—Effect on the doctrines of grace and faith—Effect on the ethics of Christianity—Effect on the political and social ideal of Christ—The evolution of the organized sacerdotal polity suppressed the most original elements of Christianity—The Reformation an attempt to recover primitive Christianity—The low ideal of the English Reformation—The ideal of the Independents—Its elements—This ideal compared with Hooker’s—How the Congregational polity affected the religion of Christ—It was the negation of Sacerdotalism—It denied the magistrate’s authority over religion, and asserted the authority of religion (not of the Church) over him—The true guarantee of religious freedom that religion be made an affair of the conscience and not of the magistrate.

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

ECCLESIASTICAL POLITY AND THE RELIGION OF CHRIST.

CHURCHES and societies, like men, ought to be studied in their actual histories, but through their distinctive ideals. The most prosaic person has in him a vein of poetry which must be found if his behaviour in the higher and more critical moments of his life is to be understood; and the most utter Church of the Philistines has its ideal elements, were it only the memory of its ancient or recent feuds with the people of God. It is well to be just even to Philistines, and what they aim at being and doing may better express their spiritual qualities and capabilities than what they actually are and do. For every church is directly and altogether responsible for its ideal, but the realization is always conditioned, either favoured or hindered, by the conflicts and limitations of place and time. Were the ideal impracticable it were bad because impotent, but where real and living it is realizable, and the struggle towards realization is certain to ameliorate the conditions, political, intellectual, moral, and religious, amid which it is carried on. The dream of a golden age, the vision of a city of God floating before the imagination of man as a glorious possibility towards which he must with all his energies and through all his ages continue to work, certain that though it ever retreats

it is yet being ever approached, is, in its power to repress the worst and quicken the best in him, a more potent factor for good than the best possible economical methods for the accumulation and distribution of wealth. Material conditions of well-being are good only so far as realized by men who do well.

Now perhaps the fittest introduction to the study of the action of Congregational principles in history is the study of the Congregational ideal, or the aims that, through the Congregational polity, the churches that profess it seek to attain and realize. It is only from this point of view that it is possible to do justice to their meaning and mission. It is here that their positive character comes out, and their polity appears in its true nature and spirit and purpose, not as it seems under the perversities and perversions of the hour, but as it stands, as it were, in the light of eternity, seeking to have the reign or kingdom of God realized on earth, not in an ecclesiastical corporation identified with religion and worked in its name, but by the regeneration of men and the consequent regeneration of the families, the societies, and the States they constitute. The great concern of Congregationalism or Independency is men, the making of men, and through them the making of a new heaven and a new earth, wherein shall dwell righteousness. It works through the individual, but not simply for the individual, seeks his good as a means rather than as a mere end in itself. It believes that its polity, instituted and administered by Christian men, is the most flexible and educative of polities, the least capable of being perverted from spiritual and ethical to formal and interested ends, the most able to exercise Christian manhood and teach it how to apply Christian principles to all matters alike of policy and practice, and the best qualified to keep the sensuous elements and accidents of religion in the background, while holding

its living truths and creative ideals ever to the front. What can be said in exposition and defence of this belief is the matter that more specially concerns us here.

It may be as well that we determine at the outset the meaning and relation of the terms Congregationalism and Independency. Neither is a very happy or distinctive term, but each is too historical and well established to be displaced. They are not mutually exclusive, rather complementary and mutually suggestive, each directly implying the other. An Independent becomes in its ultimate analysis a Congregational polity, and a Congregational must be Independent. The former term is constitutional, denotes the organizing principle or idea of the Society as well as the form under which it lives and does its work; but the latter term is relational, defines and describes the relation in which the society stands, and must, because of its very constitution, stand to every external authority. A Congregational polity is a polity which regards all legislative, disciplinary, and judicial functions as the possession and inalienable right of the congregation, or, in the New Testament sense of the term, the church; an Independent polity is a polity which declares this possession and right inviolable, things with which no alien is free to meddle. The terms are thus strictly correlative and supplementary; while the one defines the nature of the society, the other affirms its claim to be allowed to live according to its own nature that it may realize its own ideal.

Congregational is thus the term of most positive significance; yet it suffers from one radical defect: it hides the relation of the polity it denotes to its creative norm, the primitive idea of the Church, with all that it involves as to the nature of the religion intended to be realized through it. There is no polity that so strongly accentuates this idea, that claims so much for the Church, honours it so much, is in the best sense so purely and so distinctively

ecclesiastical. This term, indeed, were it possible to restore its simple and noble primitive sense, would best describe our polity. It is significant that the apostles used a term with Greek rather than with Jewish associations, *ἐκκλησία* rather than *συναγωγή*, and it is through its Greek associations that the term must be interpreted. In Athens the *ἐκκλησιασταί* * were the members of the *ἐκκλησία*, and to sit, to speak, and to vote there belonged of right to every citizen. And the *ἐκκλησία* was the symbol of the autonomy and freedom of the city, of all that was healthiest, most patriotic and educative in its life. Where every citizen knew what it was to be an *ἐκκλησιαστής*, neglected no duty it involved, despised or abused no honour it could bring, lived mindful of all the responsibilities and jealous of all the powers it laid upon him, there the city became the best that was possible to it—that most beautiful of all human things, the home of freemen, whose noblest faculties were all so exercised as to express a spontaneous yet finely regulated order. There have been no cities in the history of the world so rich in great citizens, in splendid patriotism, in culture, art, wisdom, in all fair humanities, as the cities where this ideal was most nearly realized. And the primitive Christian *ἐκκλησίαι*, were societies of freemen, organized that they might fulfil the duties of their religion, realize the ideal of their faith. And every member was an *ἐκκλησιαστής*, bound to contribute the whole wealth of his renewed manhood to the enriching and ordering of the city or society that was the home of his soul. Now the Congregational polity is the polity which attempts to recover this ideal, to enforce all the duties, affirm all the rights, and work for all the ends it involves. The individuals must be perfected if we are to have perfect societies, and only as we have perfected cities or societies

* Plato, *Gorgias*, 452 E.; *Apol.* 25, A. and often.

can we have the perfect state. The ἐκκλησιασταί must be restored to their ancient privileges, and made to fulfil their ancient duties, that the ancient ἐκκλησία may be regained, the aboriginal ideal of the Christian Church and religion realized.

While Congregational denotes the normative principle and constitution of the society, Independent simply describes the relation in which all societies so constituted must stand to every authority external or foreign. The term in its oldest historical use expressed the right of the churches to be independent, as regards interference from without, in order that they might be free to live under the sole authority of Christ. And so Independency here means freedom; "free" is the modern synonym of "independent." But the course of history showed that churches could be as intolerant as States, that States were most intolerant when the tools of churches; and so freedom from the legislative control of ecclesiastics, in the modern sense, and their courts became as necessary to the "Congregational way" as freedom from kings. It was this notion of Independency that created the idea of toleration and achieved religious liberty in England. Political freedom was the creation of free cities, where the citizens exercised the rights and fulfilled with holy zeal the duties of free men; but centralized States tend ever to become despotisms; the empires organized into uniformity and disciplined for conquest have been repressive of freedom, and promotive of manifold tyrannies. Athens free was the mother of genius and art, heroism and devotion, but Athens enslaved was the home of inflated rhetoric and sophistical disputation. And so ecclesiastical polities that build congregations into a corporate system, into a uniform and centralized body-politic, must be intolerant; to allow difference is to foster division, which means death. But the polity which declares each

congregation a free city, constituted by free men, able to make and administer its laws, secure in their ancient privileges and inalienable rights, is a polity that must be tolerant. The spirit that abolished difference and imposed uniformity would pronounce its doom. Yet independency is not isolation; toleration of difference is not indifference to truth. Free cities have known how to associate freedom and fellowship; and Congregational Churches know how to combine independency and unity, how to live together as brethren, and yet be to each other as freeborn men. They love to be independent of the State that they may the better serve the State; they are Congregational that they may the better develop within and between themselves a richer, manlier, kindlier Christian brotherhood.

The polity these correlative and complementary terms denote is the polity whose ideal is to be here discussed and described. But before we can do so we must determine the standard of comparison, the measure by which polity and ideal must alike be judged, both as regards their truth on the one hand, and practical worth on the other. On this point our first principle is plain enough; the polity of a church must be judged, not simply from the standpoint of the church, whether it be a body which boasts an ancient and continuous history, or a young society organized on the bases of common beliefs, but from the standpoint, on the one hand, of the religion in its purest and most primitive form, and, on the other, of the ends, proximate and ultimate, the religion was intended to realize. The religion of Christ existed before any Christian Church. All churches exist by virtue of the religion, while the religion exists by virtue of no church. And an ecclesiastical polity has its worth and place determined by its relation to the religion. The political ideal can be good only as it reflects and articulates the religious ideal. The best polity for a church as an aggressive or proselytizing, or as a

political and ambitious society, may be the worst for the religion as a series of Divine truths and principles; facts and doctrines, creating and governing the moral and spiritual life of man. The system that best satisfies the notion of commercial utility or political convenience may be most disastrous to the faith that works by love towards perfect obedience. If the Churches of Christ exist for the religion of Christ, then their polities must be looked at through its nature and ends, spirit and purpose. The polity that best interprets and realizes these is the best church polity.

Church polities may be divided into two great classes—the Monarchical and the Republican, each being capable of further subdivision. The Monarchical is either absolute =papal, or limited=episcopal; the former is simply an autocracy, or organized and absolute patriarchate, while the latter is constitutional, or a sovereignty qualified by law. The Republican is either oligarchical=Presbyterian, or democratic=Congregational. The former is governed by and through its elect, the men who as ministers or elders are its ruling spiritual aristocracy, but the latter is more jealous of delegated powers, loving to act in a body and as a whole, that all may, by exercising high functions, learn high things.

These, then, are the polities we have to study, and to study from the standpoint of the religion and religious ideal of Christ and His apostles. We are not specifically concerned with the bodies that profess these polities, their statistics, histories, modes of proof, methods of vindicating their right to be and to be believed as of Divine institution and authority. Our work is at once simpler and more radical; it is to bring these polities and the religious ideals—personal, social, and civil—which they imply and enforce face to face with the mind, purpose, and method of Christ and the men He directly formed and inspired. The

most convenient point at which to begin the comparison is that supplied by the most highly developed and finely articulated polity—the papal; and the convenience of beginning here is the greater, as the only points on which we care to insist are those it has in common with the more modified form of the Monarchical type—the episcopal, specifically the Anglican.

The contrast of Catholicism with the Christianity of Christ is apparent enough. There is nothing that so radically affects and determines alike the doctrine, ethics, and politics of a religion as its relation to what may be termed the sacerdotal element or idea. Now the Catholic is a system constituted and administered by a priesthood, devoted to ritual, jealous of its prerogatives, made by an enforced celibacy to feel, as it were, homeless, with all their home affections absorbed by the Church; so graded, drilled, and organized that they form, as Adam Smith said, “A sort of spiritual army, dispersed in different quarters, indeed, but of which all the movements can be directed by one head, and conducted upon one uniform plan.”* And this priesthood is necessary to the worship of God, claims to have the right to hear confession, to grant absolution, to celebrate mass, to give or withhold the sacraments, to open or shut the gate of the Church, which is to them and theirs the door of the kingdom of heaven. The priest stands between man and God, a mediator, a person seeking to control the world that is by his power over the world to come. But of all this there is in the New Testament absolutely no trace. Jesus Himself was no priest, was without priestly ancestry or associates, adopted no sacerdotal custom, chose no sacerdotal person, had no relations, save those of antagonism, to the priesthood, and the one thing it gave Him was the honour of its

* *Wealth of Nations*, bk. v. cap. i.

hate and the glorious infamy of the Cross. No one of His apostles was a priest, or exercised a single priestly function, or uttered a word that hinted at actual or possible priestly claims. The terms they used to denote the offices they held or instituted express or imply no single sacerdotal element or idea. The men who are charged to represent and administer the new faith are named prophets, or apostles, or evangelists, or pastors, or teachers, or overseers, or elders, or ministers, or deacons, but never priests. And this is a most remarkable thing, explicable only as the result of most careful and conscious purpose. The worship of Christ's day was steeped in sacerdotalism ; all its great acts and instruments and agents bore sacerdotal names, and were beset with associations and fixed in a system sacerdotal through and through. To institute a polity that had not even a reminiscence of the actual sacerdotalism, where everything priestly was so transfigured into its spiritual opposite as to be only the more completely annulled, to appoint to religious or spiritual offices that had in name no hint, in functions no shadowiest remembrance of the ancient priesthoods, implies so studious and complete a rejection of all they signified in religious politics as to be demonstrative proof that they had not, and were meant never more to have, any place in the Christian system.

In this respect the religion of Christ was an absolutely new thing ; it stood alone among the religions of the world. The notion of a spiritual worship—a pure moral obedience, a service of God by clean hands and pure hearts, a religion without priests, or temple, or sacrifices, or appointed seasons, but with the truths these symbolize realized in the spirit and expressed in the conduct—had been conceived by the Hebrew prophets. But in them it existed as an ideal, by Christ it was transformed into a reality. He fulfilled the law and the prophets, translated what they

prefigured and predicted into fact, instituted a worship that abolished the temple and all its childish symbolism, and taught man to adore God by obeying Him in spirit and in truth. And so on the religion of Christ no shadow of sacerdotalism rests; its face is radiant with pure and noble spirituality. By what is simply the most remarkable and perfect revolution in history, because the most completely worked by the wisdom and providence of God, the new religion issued in spotless spirituality from the bosom of what was then the most elaborate and selfish sacerdotalism in the world. One book, indeed, in the New Testament attributes priesthood to Christ, but it does so with the most significant limitations. His priestly life is heavenly, not earthly, the exercise of His sacerdotal functions beginning only within the veil; and He is the *one* priest, He stands alone in His office and work. He is Priest, not after the Levitical type, but after its very antithesis, its radical contrast, "the order of Melchizedek;" * and so not only priest and king in one—ethical in both relations, creating by the one peace, working through the other righteousness—but the only priest, constituting the order in which He stands, without another either beneath Him or by His side. The religion of Christ is, therefore, in the most absolute sense, a priestless religion, all the more so that a royal priesthood is ascribed to the collective society or universal Christian man.† Where all men, by virtue of their faith and common brotherhood in Christ, become priests as He is Priest, the priesthood has ceased to be an office or an order, and become the synonym of Christian manhood, the symbol of the great truth that the reign of official mediators is over, that man and God are now intended to stand face to face

* Heb. v. 6, 10; vi. 20; vii. 1-3.

† 1 Peter ii. 9; Rev. i. 6; v. 10; xx. 6.

as Father and Son. Spiritual worship means immediacy of spiritual relation, and without this immediacy the relation could not be paternal on God's side or filial on man's. Men who are under the sacerdotal law are slaves or babes, not sons.* Where the spirit of the Son is there is freedom from the priesthood that there may be fellowship with the Father. The abolition of sacerdotalism was thus necessary to the purpose and mind of Christ; it was the very respect in which His religion transcended all others that made it and required it to be a religion without priests.

But the distinctive political as well as sacerdotal elements of Catholicism do not exist in the Christianity of Christ and His apostles. The primitive Church is no unity in the Roman sense, and it knows no primacy. Its societies are not organized into a single body politic, or subordinated to a single head. There are the most marked diversities in custom and practice, the most remarkable differences in policy and method. The Jews and Greeks do not readily coalesce; the former stand on immemorial privileges and rites, the latter on their newly-won liberty. Paul and the "pillar apostles" have different provinces; he will not allow them to invade his freedom, nor will they enforce his liberty in the churches of Judæa. There is nothing he so severely condemns as the attempt to invoke the authority of certain potent names; to swear by Cephas is to renounce Christ.† But while no system could be less uniform, none could be more fraternal. Paul writes to many churches, and many churches confess him their founder and teacher; but his letters are expository or expostulatory, hortatory or biographical, and as far as possible from speaking with legal or political authority.

* Gal. iv. 1-7; Heb. v. 12, 13.

† 1 Cor. i. 12, 13; iii. 1-7.

No man ever had a doctrinal system so carefully articulated, or laboured more to make it intelligible and credible to the societies he formed; yet no man ever so carefully avoided building the societies he erected at Galatia and Rome, Ephesus and Colosse, Philippi and Thessalonica, Corinth and Athens, into a political corporation. His unity of the faith did not mean organized uniformity. And the same is true of the other apostolic writers. The only New Testament book that seems to dream of the Church as a visible and localized state is the Apocalypse, and the city of God is to it not Rome, but Jerusalem. Rome, indeed, is the unholy city, drunk with the blood of the saints, memorable as the scene of apostolic martyrdoms, not of apostolic rule.*

Into the question as to the constitution and offices of the Apostolic Church it is impossible here to enter; happily, it may almost be said, it is now unnecessary. The positions our Congregational fathers so stoutly affirmed are now coming to be accepted commonplaces. English scholarship, broadened and illumined by German, is becoming too critical in spirit and historical in method to spare the old high Anglican doctrines. Cultivated prejudice is, indeed, always the most inveterate, dies the hardest, and is bitterest in its death; but a death through more light ought to be the ideal euthanasia. It is a rare thing to find scientific criticism in a Bampton Lecture, still rarer to find it used for a really scientific purpose, especially when that purpose may be described as the proof of a thesis which has been a commonplace with us for generations.† But even more significant of the change

* Rev. xvii. 5, 6.

† *The Organization of the Early Christian Churches.* By Edwin Hatch, M.A. The Bampton Lectures for 1880. It is a very happy, and, on the whole, fairly successful attempt to deal with a deeply interesting problem. We cannot but admire its fine analyti-

in English scholarship, because proceeding from the most typical and the most influential of living Anglican scholars, was Dr. Lightfoot's essay on "The Christian Ministry."* It is as honourable to his candour as to his scholarship, especially as regards his discussions as to the constitution of the Apostolic and Sub-Apostolic Church. His later discussions as to the rise and growth of the episcopate, though marked by a laborious attempt to be impartial and moderate, are often weakened by strained interpretations. He frequently puts modern ideas into ancient terms, uses conjecture for evidence, and cunningly draws from a late document the testimonies he needs. When, *e.g.*, he describes (p. 197) St. James as the earliest bishop, he goes not only beyond, but against the evidence con-

cal qualities, its delicate appreciation of the various forces at work, and the true sense for history and historical movement that pervades it. He uses very lucidly and successfully the results of the later researches into the guilds and associations, secret or other, of the first century, to illustrate the offices and constitution of the primitive Church, though it strikes us that Mr. Hatch is here, where he is most independent and suggestive, tempted to exaggerate their influence, and to underrate or unduly overlook the larger and nobler influence of the political idea that comes from the free cities of Greece, an idea expressed in the cardinal and determinative terms *πόλις* and *ἐκκλησία*. Yet the book is a healthy one, and will help to set the questions it discusses in a fresh light before the Anglican as distinguished from the English student. But we must regret some very serious omissions in Mr. Hatch's lectures, especially his very brief allusion to the vital matter of the sacerdotal order and system that so soon grew up in the early Church, and the inadequacy of his critical and literary discussions. These omissions seem to us connected with a failure on Mr. Hatch's part rightly to appreciate the various organizing forces at work in their organic unity and movement; and so the reader is not made to perceive the action of these forces on the religion, or their reflection in the literature, with its varying tendencies, and local and temporal differences. The organization of the Christian Church worked a revolution in the Christian religion.

* *Epistle to the Philippians*, pp. 179-269. 4th Ed.

tained in the New Testament. The evidence may be instructively studied in the proof texts, which are finely suggestive of the ingenuity needed to discover in them any remotest hint of episcopal dignity or authority. They are—Gal. ii. 9; Acts xv. 13 ff.; xxi. 18; xii. 17. Dr. Lightfoot does not explain how it happened that this earliest bishop loses his episcopal functions at the most critical moment, and is not even named in connection with the most formal and solemn act of the Church at Jerusalem. It is “to the apostles and presbyters with the whole Church” that it “seems good” to choose men to go to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas, and it is the same apostles and presbyters who send the letter to the brethren of the Gentiles at Antioch (Acts xv. 22–29). It is not without meaning, too, that Paul, when he first goes up to Jerusalem, goes up to visit Cephas (Gal. i. 18), he being evidently a person more important to Paul than “the earliest bishop.” Again: when Dr. Lightfoot says (p. 208), “As early as the middle of the second century all parties concur in representing him as a bishop in the strict sense of the term,” he does not quite correctly represent the historical significance of his authorities. These are Hegesippus, as quoted by Eusebius, the Clementines, Clemens Alexandrinus, also as quoted by Eusebius, and the Apostolic Constitutions. The last is rather a curious, one would have thought an impossible, authority as to the middle of the second century. Then Clemens’ literary activity falls at the end of it, his birth after the middle. And Dr. Lightfoot does not tell us that Clemens’ notion of the bishop was by no means the episcopal or church notion. His great man was not the ἐπίσκοπος, but the γνωστικός; the latter was fit to be enrolled εἰς τὴν ἐκλογὴν τῶν ἀποστόλων.* And this was entirely in harmony with the

* Stromata vi. 13, 106.

faith and order of the then Alexandrian Church, where the head of the catechetical school was a greater man than the bishop, the succession in it the true apostolical succession. Dr. Lightfoot's other two authorities are in reality one, and the one is for purposes of proof worse than none. The ultimate authority is the Clementines; and they are not simply "gross exaggerations," but fictions, written with a doctrinal purpose which could be fulfilled only through an episcopate and by magnifying James; Hegesippus quite evidently echoes in his fragments the Ebionitic tradition which has its perfected form in the Clementines. And there are certain peculiarities of the tradition Dr. Lightfoot either overlooks or does not sufficiently emphasize. It embodies elements and stories most certainly mythical. It would be most interesting to know whether Dr. Lightfoot accepts the account of James's personal habits, or the still more extraordinary story as to his death, his being cast down from the wing of the temple and stoned—a deed said to be done by "the Scribes and Pharisees;" while the more historical Josephus attributes the death to Annas, the chief priest, and the Sadducees. Then the position of James in the Church at Jerusalem differs radically from the traditional and customary episcopal one. He holds it not as an apostle or a successor of the apostles, but as a kinsman of the Lord, and his successor is appointed on the same grounds. His case supplies no parallel to the historical episcopate, and his office, if office it can be called, can in no respect be traced back to any institutive act either of Christ or His apostles.

We may say, then, the Divine right of episcopacy is dead; it died of the light created by historical criticism. It is open to no manner of doubt that the modern bishop has no place in the New Testament. The same office was variously designated, according as it was viewed in one or

another aspect,* bishops and presbyters were identical,† and one church might have many bishops or presbyters, just as it might have many deacons.‡ Each church was a brotherhood; supremacy over it was conceded to no man. Government, indeed, existed, order was enforced, but the men who ruled were the men who served, and the Church was in all matters of judgment and discipline the ultimate authority.§ The apostolic is the simplest and least organized of societies; a society where the freedom of the Spirit is largely loved and its gifts highly esteemed, where official clergy are unknown and the man who can teach is free to speak,|| and the man most honoured is the man who most loves. There is no primate in any church; even the apostles do not claim an administrative and executive authority above and apart from the churches.¶ Discipline is to be exercised as in the presence of the apostle and in the name of the Lord, but by the collective and collected society.** The liberty they enjoy in Christ is inalienable, and to be Christ's is to be introduced into a brotherhood too real and too spontaneous to accept the bondage of any officialism, however consecrated or endowed.

The primacy which thus in the apostolic age belonged to no man, or city, or church, is even more completely absent from the mind and speech of Christ. His most familiar idea is the kingdom, His least familiar the Church. The society He institutes is a kingdom; called "of heaven,"

* *προϊστάμενοι*, 1 Thess. v. 12; Rom. xii. 8; *πρεσβύτεροι*, Acts xi. 30; xiv. 23; xv. 2 ff., &c.; *ἐπίσκοποι*, Phil. i. 1; *ποιμένες*, Eph. iv. 11; *ἡγούμενοι*, Heb. xiii. 7, 17, 24.

† 1 Tim. iii. 1-2; cf. v. 17; Titus i. 5-7; 1 Peter v. 1-2; Acts xx. 17, 18, 20.

‡ Phil. i. 1.

§ Cf. 1 Cor. v. 3-5; 2 Cor. ii. 5 ff.

|| Acts viii. 4; xi. 19-21; 1 Cor. xiv.; Rom. xii. 6-8.

¶ Acts vi. 3-6.

** 1 Cor. v. 3-5.

in opposition to the empires of earth, the secular monarchies that lived by violence and grew by conquest; called "of God," in opposition to the kingdom of darkness or the devil, the reign of evil in and over man. But though He institutes, He does not organize His kingdom, speaks of it rather as incapable of organization, appoints no viceroys, governors, or officers; simply proclaims the truths and laws that are to create the reign of God in the heart of man. The term Church He uses only twice; once in what may be named its individual sense, as denotive of a single assembly or constituted congregation,* and once in the more universal sense, as denotive of His collective society.† It is only by the most violent exegesis that this latter can be made to seem to promise pre-eminence to Peter; but if it did, what then? It can in no way help the claims of Catholicism; for there is no proof that the promise had any reference to Peter's successors, no proof that Peter had any successors, absolutely none that they are the popes of Rome.

Here, then, we are brought face to face with a curious problem—How has a political and sacerdotal system so complex, so immense, so comprehensive as the papal, risen out of a society so simple, spontaneous, and unorganized as the apostolic? or, how has the priestless, kindly, sanely domestic and socially human religion of Jesus developed into the hierarchic and celibate sacerdotalism of Rome? It is impossible within our limits to deal adequately and exhaustively with this problem, but one or two points may be here noted, especially such as indicate the oldest tendencies and signs of change. These are found outside the New Testament, not, indeed, in the most ancient and authentic extra-canonical literature, but in the secondary and more or less spurious and corrupt.

* Matt. xviii. 17.

† Ibid. xvi. 18.

In Clemens Romanus, for example, the church idea is thoroughly apostolic. In the individual church, episcopacy, in the modern sense, is quite unknown, order is loved, the overseers or leaders, or the presbyters and deacons, are honoured, and have authority over the people only as they worthily fill the office received from the people, in harmony with apostolic custom and ordinance.* There is no reference to any bishop in either church; no notion of the church save as a society of the godly, the elect of God; no idea that any man or body of men has the right to control its action, or possesses any claim to jurisdiction over its affairs. In the relation of the churches, Rome claims no primacy over Corinth, demands no obedience from it, but simply writes a letter of fraternal expostulation and advice. Church speaks to church, not bishop to bishop, or presbytery to presbytery, the writer absolutely suppressing his own personality that the church may the more emphatically speak. The occasion of the letter is significant; the church at Corinth had deposed certain men, bishops and deacons, from office. Its right to do so is never even by implication questioned, the complaint and remonstrance being simply this—the act is

* Ch. xlv. In this same chapter occurs the verse which Rothe used as one of his great proofs for the apostolic institution of the episcopate (*Die Anfänge der christliche Kirche*, pp. 374–392). His interpretation is so fanciful and forced that it remains his—too peculiar to become any other body's. Even Dr. Lightfoot, though his own essay owes so much to Rothe, and he is so strongly tempted by the fineness of the theory, holds the interpretation to be “unwarranted, and to interrupt the context with irrelevant matter” (*Epis. S. Clement of Rome*, Notes to ch. xlv. Cf. *Philippians*, pp. 199 ff.). See also Gebhardt and Harnack's *Pat. Apos. Opera*, Fascic. i. pp. 71 ff. Baur (*Ursprung des Episcopats*, pp. 53–61) examines exhaustively Rothe's interpretation, as does also Ritschl (*Entstehung der altkatol. Kirche*, pp. 413. 2nd Ed.). Donaldson, *The Apostolic Fathers*, pp. 171–175, discusses the point briefly, but impartially.

unjust, for the men are holy and blameless. So completely is the modern notion of bishop absent that the same persons are evidently meant by the terms *ηγούμενοι, πρεσβύτεροι, ἐπίσκοποι*.* Thirty years later this plurality of persons in the office and variety of name for it come out quite as strongly in *Hermas*, where we find the terms, *πρεσβύτεροι, † ἐπίσκοποι, ‡ προηγούμενοι, § πρωτοκαθεδρίται, ||* used to denote the overseers of the churches. In the last reference and term the Shepherd evidently means to be ironical and admonitory. He means to reprove the struggle after the pre-eminence, which to him is typified by the chief seat or highest place, and so he elsewhere describes the man who exalts himself, and wishes to have the *πρωτοκαθεδρίαν* as one who is a prophet only in seeming.¶ While *Hermas* shows a change, not indeed unresisted, in process at Rome in the first half of the second century, Polycarp helps us to see the same in the East. His epistle to the Philippians presents a remarkable phenomenon—he seems in the superscription to distinguish himself from the presbyters who are with him; but in the epistle he neither mentions nor in any way alludes to any bishop in Philippi. The church there had its presbyters and deacons, but no person that could be described as a bishop.

The change thus seen at work appears in a completer and more emphatic form in, on the one hand, the Ignatian Epistles, and, on the other, the Clementine Recognitions and Homilies. These are, indeed, very dissimilar productions, but this only makes their agreement on the point in question the more significant. The former, at least in their earliest and least corrupt form, belong to the

* Cf. cc. i., xlii., xliv., xlvii., liv., lvii.

† Vis. ii. 4.

‡ Ibid. iii. 5.

§ Ibid. i. 2.

|| Ibid. iii. 9.

¶ Mand., xi.

first, the latter to the second half of the second century. The interval that divides them from Clemens Romanus is simply immense. The Ignatian Epistles are a standing problem and perplexity to criticism; some of them are certainly spurious, all of them are largely interpolated and hopelessly corrupt, but all the more they are significant of changes that were secretly, but effectually, transforming the Christian Church. The Clementine works, on the other hand, are less a textual and literary puzzle, but quite as great an historical one; they are more homogeneous, but no more authentic. These works represent two distinct yet related tendencies, each working towards the same end. Both are significant and effective of ecclesiastical change, but the Ignatian is more Gentile and ethical, the Clementine more Judaic and legal. The tendency in both is towards a corporate unity, which is secured and symbolized by the *ἐπίσκοπος*. In both the bishop is a necessity to the church, embodies and, in a sense, creates it. In the Ignatian Epistles he is the soul and source of order, the efficient agent in worship; who honours him honours God, who refuses to hear him refuses to hear God whose vicar or substitute he is. In the Clementine Homilies, the Church, like the State, means a single ruler—many kings cause many wars—and is compared to a ship whose master is God, whose pilot is Christ, whose chief oarsman is the bishop, without whom it cannot carry its passengers into the haven of eternal blessedness. The Epistles* describe the bishop as *εἰς τόπον θεοῦ προκαθήμενος*; the Homilies† say of him, *ὁ προκαθεζόμενος Χριστοῦ τόπον πεπίστευται*. The idea is in both the same; the Bishop presides in the place of God; he sits in the chair and occupies the place of Christ. Yet within the agreement

* Ad Mag., vi.

† Hom. iii. 66. Cf. Recognitions, iii. 66. Ep. Clem. Ad. Jac., 17.

there is a most significant difference; the Ignatian bishop is the bishop of the given church, or congregation, made by the church he rules, without any right to be apart from it; but the Clementine bishop is kinsman and representative of the Lord, possessing the rights and authority of Him whose representative he is, making by his very presence the cause he champions apostolic and Christian. And with this difference a second, no less significant, is connected. The Ignatian bishop is mainly of political importance, the symbol of order in discipline and worship; but the Clementine is mainly doctrinal, the vehicle or agent of a distinct theological tendency. The episcopal idea was not fully elaborated till the two tendencies were united, and this union we see in Irenæus when he argues that a special order or class was needed for the transmission of the apostolic doctrine. His skilful argument had been anticipated by the author of the Clementines, and so the grand depository of truth and safeguard of orthodoxy was fitly enough the product of the earliest and most anti-Christian heresy.

That this is the simple and strict historical truth becomes evident when we compare the two sets of documents for the moment before us. The Ignatian Epistles have a political and disciplinary tendency, but the Clementines a distinctly doctrinal purpose. In the former the great concern of the bishop, what he has zealously to seek, is unity, the most precious of things. In order to secure it he must be patient with all men, studious of the weak, vigilant, prayerful, faithful, standing fast in the truth, discerning the times, being specially watchful of the people, and mindful of all that pertains to the care and cure of souls, to the regularity and regulation of worship. These epistles are possessed with a great fear, the fear that the Spirit may be too varied in His manifestations. Order is to be created by each church having a single

head, lawlessness repressed by law being made to reside in a single person. Nothing in its way could be less apostolic than this standpoint. The epistles are quite without the fine respect for Christian freedom, the noble faith in Christian manhood, in its essential and ultimate reasonableness, which ever characterizes Paul. The belief in outer and political as opposed to inner and spiritual methods, in an administrative human will as opposed to a constraining Divine love, in a legal uniformity as opposed to a spiritual unity, is the belief that distinguishes, almost immeasurably for the worse, these Ignatian from the Apostolical Epistles. We have come into another and lower atmosphere and find the enthusiasm of the apostle superseded by the fanaticism of the churchman.

The spirit and tendency of the Clementines are very different. They are written in opposition to Pauline or Gentile Christianity, and in the interests of Ebionitic or Judaic. They embody the spirit and doctrine Paul contended against in his Corinthian, Roman, and Galatian Epistles, and so they who wish to bring the old into the new economy make the gospel a continuation and extension of the law. They can do this best by personalizing authority, exactly in the manner so severely rebuked in first Corinthians and Galatians; and as there, so here, the names that are conjured with are those of James and Peter. James and his brother apostles are made the alone accredited teachers, bestowing by ordination the right to teach. The *ἐπίσκοπος ἐπισκόπων* is James; he is the ultimate authority, and whatever does not derive from him is heresy.* By this means the freer and more universal Christianity can easily be dealt with; it has only to be represented as in antagonism with the original apostolic brotherhood. Argument is not needed; history

* Recog. iv. 35; Hom. xi. 35.

is argument. In these Homilies we have the Ebionitic version of the apostolic history; it is a late, unauthentic, almost purely imaginary version, but only on this account the more significant as to what the Judaizing party wished Christianity to be, and as to how they hoped to realize their wishes. Their hopes were in an authoritative person, in a personalized unity. Moses could be superinduced on Christ, the old legalism placed over the new gospel, with all it implied as to the dominion of the letter and the bondage of the spirit, only by the agency of an authoritative person, and he, of course, was easily and expressly created for the work. Their law was incompatible with freedom. "Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty;" and where men feared this liberty, the universal Christian brotherhood, the freedom diffused through every unit of the Church, they met it by the institution of a bishop, who was to be the basis of order, the symbol of unity, the vicar and voice of God. Episcopacy was the product of faithlessness; it grew out of disbelief in the sufficiency of the gospel to save the men who were enslaved by sin, and in the power of the Spirit to guide and control the men Christ had made free.

Once these ideas found a footing in the young society, their development was inevitable. The development was not, indeed, uniform, was more rapid in Syria and Asia Minor, more gradual in Greece and Alexandria and Rome. This is as was to be expected, and is in harmony with the origin and rapid growth of the high episcopal doctrine among the heretical sects of the East, especially those Judaizing sects that were so strongly opposed to the spiritual and universal Christianity of Paul. But though the tendency became common and grew irresistible, the old customs and beliefs struggled hard for life, and died slowly. While the bishop became the symbol and source of authority, who alone could ordain, without

whom neither baptism nor the eucharist could be celebrated, yet we see in Tertullian how the right to administer these still lingered in the community; and even in Cyprian traces of the original equality of bishops and presbyters can be discovered. But various conditions combined to favour the new development. The political evoked the sacerdotal tendency, and they together became the main factors of a movement that effected a radical revolution in the spiritual and priestless religion of Christ. The change, indeed, was slow and gradual. The oldest Judaizing heresy was legal, but not sacerdotal, laboured to introduce circumcision, but not sacrifice, the law of the scribes, not the order of the priesthood. The very Clementines, with all their zeal for Jewish and aversion to Gentile Christianity, stand remote from the sacerdotal idea, only once applying to Christ Himself the term High Priest.* The faith of the second century was the faith of the first, as is proved by sayings like those of Justin Martyr, "We Christians are the true high priestly race of God;" † or those of Irenæus, "All the righteous possess the priestly rank." ‡ The universal priesthood could not be official, could only be spiritual in its character, acts, and functions. But the political tendency created an order or class so specially and exclusively concerned with religion as to be necessary alike to worship and instruction, the being, organization, and administration of the church. The *κληρος* came to stand over against the *λαός*, and the more the distinction was emphasized the more the most sacred functions became the special possession of the clergy, and the more the notion of sanctity got associated with the office and dissociated from the person. The *κληρος* was one order,

* Recog. i. 48.

† Dial. 116.

‡ Adv. Hær. iv. c. 8, § 3.

special, consecrated, elect, and the λαός another order, common, secular, profane. If the clergy were necessary to the being of the church, they were also necessary to the realization of religion; and so there was not only the gravest of all schisms introduced into the body of Christ, but, as it were, the centre of gravity was changed, and all movements, evolutional and organizing, regulated by the legislative and administrative order rather than by the Divine and living Head.

In this notion of the κληρος, so utterly unknown and alien to primitive and apostolical Christianity, a whole new sacerdotalism was involved, and waited only time and opportunity for evolution. And these were not denied. The moment given official persons are conceived as necessary to the sanctity and truth of worship, collective and social, and in order to its fit performance formed into a special body or class—that moment a priesthood has been constituted. The birth of the idea in the Christian Church signified the victory of heathen and Jewish customs and ideas over the truth and kingdom of Christ. Without the peculiar political development we have traced, this victory would have been impossible; with this development it was inevitable. Neander thinks that the idea of an official priesthood came into Christianity from Judaism.* Ritschl, on the other hand, derives it from the inability of the Gentile Christianity to understand the fundamental truths of the gospel.† The two positions do not exclude each other, both are necessary to the explanation of the result, neither is sufficient alone. Mental tendencies common to Jew and Greek were the efficient factors of the change, the political development supplied the conditions of their action, and the relation, at once filial and supersessory, of

* *Church Hist.* vol. i. pp. 270, 271. (Bohn's Ed.)

† *Altkathol. Kirche*, p. 394.

the new religion to Judaism, furnishes the norm or form of the idea to be realized. Jew and Greek alike esteemed the sacerdotal the sacred ; what was not sensuously holy was not holy at all. Both alike knew the priest, neither knew religion without him, and thus were not so disciplined and exercised as to be able easily to comprehend so pure and spiritual a thing as a religion without priests. If the Church had been allowed to remain as it had been made by Christ and His apostles, it would have educated men into the spirit of the new religion, have taught them to exercise the spiritual and royal priesthood granted to universal Christian manhood. But the special religious class, with its graded orders, directly suggested the ancient priesthods, and the idea thus suggested found at once expression, expansion, and authority from the relation in which the New Testament was conceived to stand to the old. The one was the type, the other the antitype, and the logic, which is never so rigorous as when it works in the collective mind, drove men to seek in the antitype a parallel, or copy of every element they found in the type. In the apostolical age, as became its exalted standpoint, the symbols of the old were conceived as fulfilled in the spiritual realities of the new ; the visible and carnal sacrifices, temple, priesthood of Mosaism, were replaced by the living sacrifices, the invisible temple, the universal priesthood of Christ and His Church. But the men of a century later were too sensuous to comprehend this exalted ideal ; they could better understand the new as not the spiritual fulfilment, but the actual reproduction of the old. Old Testament prophecy is the historical basis of apostolic Christianity, but Old Testament legalism, as lower and more sensuous, was more intelligible to the Gentile, because more in harmony with the unethical heathenism, so rich in priests, in which he had been nursed. This, indeed, was a point where Jew and Gentile could most

sympathetically meet, and unite in the effort to translate the new back into the terms and conditions of the older faith.

These historical movements and mental tendencies, viewed in their reciprocal action, made the rise of a new priesthood natural, in a sense inevitable. It was more familiar and sensible, more in harmony with universal and immemorial custom, to speak of the person active in religion as a priest than as an elder, or teacher, or preacher. It was an inconvenient thing to men who had to prove the truth of the new religion by the authority of the old, to find the one culminate in a priestly organization, while the other had no organized or visible priesthood whatever. Thus Clemens Romanus * uses the high priest, priest, and Levite of the Jewish Church to prove and illustrate his idea of order in the Christian; and though he does not find a parallel priesthood in the latter, yet his argument shows that he was saved from this simply by the still prevailing apostolic constitution of the Church. But once the political tendency had created the clerical order and made the bishop the cardinal person in worship, authoritative in doctrine, executive in discipline, the basis and symbol of unity, then the conditions existed that not only allowed, but even required, the sacerdotal tendency to transfer the Jewish priesthood, changed in name, but unchanged in spirit and essence, into the Christian Church. The act of translation, open and confessed, meets us strangely but instructively enough in Tertullian. Two rival tendencies struggle in him, the Montanist and the Jewish, and though the former prevailed in what we may term the sphere of life and practice, the latter penetrated and tragically transformed his idea of religion. The bishop becomes to him *sacerdos*.† The presbyters

* xl.

† De Pudic. 21.

form an *ordo sacerdotalis*,* and the bishop is *summus sacerdos*,† and *pontifex maximus*.‡ And Tertullian was here symptomatic of the tendency active throughout the Church. Hippolytus § denotes his office by the terms ἀρχιερατεία τε καὶ διδασκαλία. Cyprian, of course, goes further, and his bishop is uniformly *sacerdos*, his associates *con-sacerdotes*, and the presbyters are *cum episcopo sacerdotali honore conjuncti*.|| Of the ancient “holy” or “royal” priesthood, which was common to all believers, he appears never to have thought, but to the bishops he applies the Mosaic ordinances relative to the tribe of Levi and the house of Aaron.¶ In the Apostolic Constitutions the bishop is frequently designated ἱερεὺς,** and once, indeed, ἀρχιερεὺς.†† These terms signified not only the rise of a priesthood within a once priestless religion, but the genesis of a new order of ideas. Obedience ceased to be moral and became legal, worship ceased to be spiritual and became sacerdotal. There cannot be a *sacerdotium* without a *sacrificium*, and so new modes and kinds of sacrifice had to be invented that the priesthood might live. All that Christ most hated in Judaism entered and took possession of the faith that called itself by His name. His Church ceased to be a society of the like-minded, where the freedom of the Spirit reigned, and became a stupendous sacerdotal *civitas*, or State, where the priesthood claimed to be

* De Exh. Cast. 7.

† De Baptis. 17.

‡ De Pudic. 1. Tertullian's Montanism saved him from falling a complete victim to the idea of an official priesthood. No Father pleaded more strongly for the universal priesthood of Christian men. The *Pontifex Maximus* of the last reference is ironical, but on this account all the more significant of the claims advanced by the person satirically described as the *episcopus episcoporum*.

§ Refut. Omn. Hær. i. Proem.

|| Ep. lxi. 2.

¶ Epp. i. 3; iv. 4; lxv. 2; lxvi. 3; lxvii. 1; lxxii. 3; lxxiii. 8.

** Epp. ii. 34, 35, 36; iii. 9; vi. 15, 18.

†† Epp. vi. 27, 57.

dispensatores Dei,* and governed in His name for their own ends.

This attempt to describe the process and analyze the courses and conditions of early ecclesiastical development has already led us too far, and we must not allow it to tempt us to go farther. Enough to say, everything favoured the growth of the hierarchic polity. The dream of universal empire that Rome had so nearly realized supplied the Roman church with an ideal; over against the *Civitas Roma* rose the *Civitas Dei*, making men its citizens by baptism, now a priestly rite, and giving to the enfranchised a title to heaven. As the Empire decayed, the church stepped into its place; as the one decreased, the other increased in its ability to maintain order. The more its politico-sacerdotal agencies and activities were exercised, the more they were developed. The supremacy of Rome passed to the church; the Pope superseded Cæsar, and exercised ecclesiastical functions, more imperial than any political functions his predecessor had ever exercised. Culture had died, and with it criticism—which, even when severest and least friendly, is most serviceable to the Church, she being more able to dispense with the apologies of her sons than with the criticisms of her enemies. States and dynasties were too unstable and short-lived to offer resistance to her arrogant claims. Civil power was ever changing hands, new provinces or peoples were ever coming suddenly to the front, and were ever being as suddenly forced to the rear. But above all changes the church sat, watching all, profiting by all, multiplying her sensuous sanctities, enacting and enforcing her sacerdotal laws.

But now these historical discussions have only helped to bring us face to face with our real problem, How did

* Cyprian, Ep. lix. 7.

these changes affect the religion of Christ? Did they only the better preserve it, or did they work a revolution in the religion, suppressing, where they did not supersede, its most distinctive qualities? These are here the really determinative questions. It is a small thing to prove that a given church has a continuous history, that it has an unbroken tradition, that its teachers stand in the direct line of descent from the apostles; the cardinal and conclusive matter is to prove that this history has been a continuous growth in the religion, and not in any vital respect away from it. It is a matter most insignificant to make out that a given polity was the polity of the primitive churches; but it were a matter of the very highest moment to make out that the polity of these churches is the permanent polity, because the most fitting vehicle for the realization of the religion they were founded by and founded for. The polity of a church can never be divorced from the faith it professes, for it means, if it means anything, the application of its religious principles and ideals to society, and their application in the form, not simply most suited to the society, but best adapted to secure their realization. This is the only point of view from which we care to discuss the question of ecclesiastical polity, because the only one that does justice to the sphere and mission of the churches. What does not deal with them as the living prophets of the Eternal, the active and beneficent representatives of Christ, the expositors in word and act of the Divine idea for humanity, does not deal with them according to their intrinsic nature. But this involves the very essence of our contention—the politics of the churches must be studied through the religion of Christ, must be appraised and judged by their ability to articulate His truth, incarnate His Spirit, and realize His ends.

We come, then, back to our problem—How did the evolution of the sacerdotal polity affect the Church as the

vehicle and exponent of the religion of Christ? Let us attempt briefly to answer this question as regards certain of the most distinctive features in what we may term the doctrine, the ethics, and the politics of the religion.

1. Faith was a cardinal apostolic doctrine. In its most general sense it meant the free and rational receptivity of man standing, open and trustful, before the grace, the spontaneous and redemptive energies of God. "The grace of God" is the happiest phrase ever coined to express the relation between His beatitude and His benevolence, to denote that glad necessity of nature which, as it were, determines or constrains a being of infinite happiness to create happiness, to seek to save His creatures from the misery they themselves had caused. And the God of Christ and His apostles was "the God of all grace," which means that He was a God whose joy was to create joy; but a joy possible to Him and His creatures only as they consciously stood in the most personal and trustful relations. Hence its necessary correlative was faith. Where faith did not stand first in the order of human duties, grace could not stand first in the order of Divine truths. The man who did not believe could have no joy in God; the man who has no joy in God forbids, as it were, God to have joy in him. Hence the men who most preached grace most demanded faith, the response of the soul in filial trust to the beneficent self-communication of God. But faith implies the exercise of thought. To ask it is to appeal to the reason, is to seek to persuade it, as independent and free, by reasonable words and methods. And the apostolic preachers were most reasonable men; the greatest of them was one of the supreme dialecticians of the world. They held that "without faith it was impossible to please God." On faith everything depended, out of it all issued. "By faith" men were "justified with God,"*

* Rom. v. i.; iii. 28. Gal. ii. 16; iii. 11.

“saved,”* “renewed,”† “sanctified.”‡ The only righteousness God approved was the righteousness of faith.§ And the whole notion of religion stood connected with this central idea. It was a matter of the Spirit; the spiritual man was the religious man; and the men of faith were the men of God, who had done His will and His work in the world.

Now how did the sacerdotal polity affect the doctrines of grace and faith? Did it preserve to them the place, the prominence, the functions they held in the apostolic age? This was the very thing it could not afford to do. For the immediate relation of God and the soul, it had to substitute a mediate relation, worked through its organized polity, and even this could be mediated only through authorized mediators. For the direct appeal of the truth to the reason, it had to substitute the word of authority, and the voice of God was muffled and muzzled by the voice of the church. Justification by sacraments is the contradiction of justification by faith; grace that lives in and works through ritual is but the elaborate impotence of man, not the spontaneous beneficence of God. The new polity was the repeal of the apostolic doctrine, and if the doctrine was necessary to the religion of Christ, the polity was fatal to it.

2. As to the ethics, it will be enough to note two points. The first concerns one of the most remarkable qualities of Christ's teaching, what may be termed its *inwardness*. The great matter was not what a man *did*, but what he *was*. The *doing* would be right were the *being* right. Alms before men, prayers in the temple and at the street corners, phylacteries or pious formulæ of any kind, fasts, care for ceremonial purifications and practices—these and

* Eph. ii. 8. † 1 John v. 1. ‡ Acts xxvi. 18.

§ Rom. i. 17; ix. 30; x. 3, 4. Phil. iii. 9.

such-like were to Him no religious virtues, only masks and mockeries that deceived alike the doer and beholder, "dead works" that usurped the place of living obedience to God and beneficent duties to man. His own ideal was—a man with light and life within, determined in all his actions by love, jealous of the ostentatious and ceremonial, suspicious of a goodness according to rule and custom, cultivating its spirit and doing its works in secret, perfect as God is perfect, full of all ethically holy activities, yet possessing and enjoying the sweet and sane and familiar humanities. Now what are the moral tendencies of an elaborately organized society at once sacerdotal and political? Exactly those Christ most resisted, hated, suffered from—those that most seek to compel a uniform ceremonial or outward obedience, that identify ritual and rules with right conduct, sensuous worship with living obedience. And what are the virtues it most produces, cultivates, and praises? Precisely those that Christ held to be most unreal, the mimicry and counterfeit of the true and the good. This applies not simply to the kind of things that come to be esteemed virtuous, like penances and repetition of formulated and prescribed prayers, but also to virtues that seem more distinctly moral. Submission may, under certain conditions, be a very excellent quality; but if it be so exaggerated as to be absolute, it becomes a positive vice. The man who makes a complete surrender of his conscience to his superior and regards himself as a simple vehicle or agent of his superior's will, ceases to be, in the true sense, a moral man, renounces knowledge of the inward law Jesus so laboured to make articulate, and obedience to the living God who speaks in it. And absolute submission is the attitude not simply of the Jesuit to his superior, but of every man who places his soul in the hands of a spiritual director, to whom he makes confession, through whom he receives absolution,

and in conformity to whose expressed will he undertakes to walk. The inwardness Christ required is not possible to him—the light is not inner, the life is not inner; the truth he knows does not “make him free” and become within “a well of water springing up unto everlasting life,” and his virtues are not such as become a kingdom which is “righteousness, joy, peace in the Holy Ghost.”

The other point to be noted in the primitive and apostolical ethics is for our discussion even more significant, for it touches the very heart of the idea of religion and religious service. As Christ and the apostles spiritualized the idea of the priesthood, they also spiritualized the idea of sacrifice. These two, indeed, must always correspond. Where the priesthood is sensuous or carnal, sacrifice must be the same, and so if either becomes spiritual the other must be made spiritual as well. In harmony with this necessity the sacrifices of the New Testament are all ethical, forms in which man expresses his obedience to God, or the complete surrender of himself and all he has to the Divine will. Men who present their bodies a “living sacrifice” offer what is “holy and acceptable unto God,” perform what is in its nature a service of reason.* The sacrifices with which “God is well pleased,” are beneficence and charity.† The “holy priesthood” are, indeed, expressly chosen “to offer up spiritual sacrifices.”‡ “Praise” is a “sacrifice,” § and the spontaneous gifts of love are “an odour of sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God.”|| The most Jewish writer in the New Testament emphasizes these ideas in his definition of “pure religion and undefiled;” it knows neither sacerdotalism nor legalism, but is simply “to visit the widow and father-

* Rom. xii. i.

† Heb. xiii. 16.

‡ 1 Peter ii. 5. -

§ Heb. xiii. 15.

|| Phil. iv. 18.

less in their affliction, to keep himself unspotted from the world." *

Now if we turn from the New Testament to a writer still so comparatively apostolical as Cyprian, the nature and bearing of the change worked by the sacerdotal idea becomes at once apparent. The spiritual idea may be said to have vanished, the priesthood of the bishops has superseded the priesthood of believers, and the bread and wine of the supper, so far as the body and blood of Christ are identical with them, have become the true sacrifice. The supper is the *sacrificium dominicum*, instituted by Christ in His capacity of High Priest, offered by the bishop, as the vicarious priest, to God the Father, as Christ originally had been. The celebration of the supper is a *sacrificium dei Patris et Christi*, the wine is *Vinum calicis dominici Sanguinis*, and so he can say *passio est domini Sacrificium, quod offerimus*.† The revolution is as complete as it is disastrous; the apostolical idea is not only lost, but replaced by an idea that is its very contradiction. The primitive idea was full of splendid ethical meaning, of the immensest moral energy. It made obedience the only sacrifice possible to man and pleasing to God. It made conduct the body of the religion whose soul was love. It bound faith and action, believing and living, the grace of God and the service of man in holy and indissoluble bonds. It made Christianity the most beneficent power that had ever entered the world, a religion that incorporated and transfigured morality, that universalized the higher and

* James i. 27.

† Ep. lxi. 4, 5, 6, 9, 17 (Ox. Ed.) This whole epistle, *Ad Cæcilium de Sacramento Domini Calicis*, is an extremely instructive study. It shows how completely the New Testament idea of Christian sacrifice had been metamorphosed, and with what subtle and fantastic ingenuity the history of the Old Testament could be used to foist doctrines into the New.

the gentler virtues, that made all the religious forces of life and thought moral forces, and turned the most pious into the most virtuous and saintly man. But the sacerdotal revolution reversed all this, divorced sacrifice from the life, made it sensuous, a thing created by an institution, offered by an order capable of all the abuses that made religion and morality not only distinct, but almost inveterate foes. To the religion of Christ, Jesuit casuistry is radically alien, but it is only the applied morality of scientific sacerdotalism.

3. But the sacerdotal polity even more completely changed and depraved the political and social ideal of Christ and His apostles. That ideal was a free spiritual brotherhood, where men lived in the spirit and walked by it. Clergy and laity did not stand sharply opposed to each other, distinguished and divided by official, which are ever fictitious, sanctities; nay, clergy and laity did not even exist. The most eminent distinctions were moral, the best gifts spiritual, and possible to all. The man who lived nearest to God stood highest among men; he who loved most lived the best. Office carried with it no special sanctity, sanctity only qualified for office. The supreme thing was the incorporation of the ethical ideal in a spiritual commonwealth, where the good of each was the aim and joy of all, and each had his place and function in the society determined by the gift which manifested the grace of God. Regarded as to its internal relations, it was a family, a brotherhood, a household of faith; * from the standpoint of its privileges and liberties it was an *ἐκκλησία*, or society of the enfranchised, where every man was free and a citizen; † from its relation to God, it could be variously

* Ephes. iii. 15; 1 Peter ii. 17; 1 Thess. iv. 9; Gal. vi. 10; Ephes. ii. 19.

† 1 Cor. i. 2; 2 Cor. viii. 19.

described, as a "kingdom," an "elect people," a "royal priesthood," or a "temple built of living stones."* The latter aspects are signally significant; where the temple is spiritual, built of living stones, quickened and glorified by the indwelling God, the only sanctity possible is one of persons, not of place or rite, or act and symbol. When man in Christ became at once the temple and the priesthood, the ancient sensuous worship utterly ceased, and the only sacrifices acceptable to God were those of living obedience and holy will.

But the essential elements in this ideal are precisely the elements cancelled and annihilated by a priestly polity in all its possible forms. It builds on the distinction between clergy and laity, and loves official sanctities as its very life. The priesthood becomes a sacred office, the priest a sacred person, and all laymen belong to the world and are concerned with things profane. The clergy constitute the Church; without them the highest worship is impossible, the society unable to approach God without its priests. Sacred orders are fatal to brotherhood; distinct classes, not to say castes, forbid fraternity. And the duties they enforce are not ethical, but official and artificial. Place and function in the society are determined not by the gifts of the Spirit, but by the rules and agencies of the order. Sacerdotal office does not demand the highest spiritual manhood; priests are too easily made to require the noblest material for their making. The system that does not emphasize the need of the highest spiritual qualities in the man concerned with religion is a bad religious system, and no official priesthood in any religion the world has known ever gave to the ethical its proper and authoritative place. The evolution of sacerdotalism in the Christian

* John xviii. 36-37; 1 Peter ii. 9; Titus ii. 14; Heb. viii. 10; 1 Peter ii. 5; 1 Cor. iii. 16-19; 2 Cor. vi. 16; Ephes. iii. 21.

Church was the death of all the distinctive social and moral elements in the religion of Christ.

It thus seems that the evolution of the organized sacerdotal polity at once superseded and suppressed the elements in Christianity that were most distinctively original, those most decisively emphasized by Christ and His apostles. And this is true alike of doctrine and precept, faith and conduct, political ideal and social realization. Now this supplies the standpoint from which the Reformation must be studied and interpreted: it was, as it were, an attempt to recover primitive Christianity, with its ideas and methods, its doctrines and duties, its truths and modes of action. It was an attempt necessarily based on the Scriptures, especially those of the New Testament. These showed what the original had been, what Jesus had said and suffered, done and designed, what His apostles thought and taught, attempted and achieved. The minds of the Reformers might be thus expressed: "In order that it may do its work in the world, Christianity must again become the religion of Christ." But it was easier to see what was needed than to accomplish it. Much, of course, was gained by the mere revolt from the sacerdotal polity which had been organized into Catholicism. Its strength was broken; it might storm as of old, but its thunder had lost its power to terrify, and its lightning to smite. But what rose in the revolted provinces was not the primitive ideal, but only more or less remote approximations to it. The Reformers, like men everywhere, worked under the limitations of time and place; and they did not work alone. They had to work through, and along with, and, in certain cases, under kings and states. The Reformer that worked most through and least under a State accomplished his work most thoroughly; the Reformers that worked most completely under and for a sovereign accomplished the

least. The scene of the most thorough reformation was Geneva, of the least complete, England; and the difference was in no respect more manifest than in this—the Genevan had all the aggressive, zealous, strenuous spirit of primitive Christianity, but England had almost none of it. There was more apostolic activity and purpose in Geneva than in any other city of the Reformation. There was there a splendid faith in the truth, in the right of the ideal to command the actual, in the formative as in the reformative force of the Divine original, in its claim to be in all things the creative, constitutive, and normative principle. And small Geneva did marvellous things—sent its strong faith into France, into Holland, into remote Scotland, invaded even Lutheran Germany, and wherever it went it acted like iron in the spiritual blood, raised up massive, heroic men, stoical in character, stern in temper, inflexible in will, unable to accept defeat, yet in victory ever conscious that God alone was victorious. But the Anglican Church was thoroughly insular, lived and acted as a Church for the English, without universal sympathies, save where here and there touched by Genevan influences, accomplishing the work with as little change as possible, leaving as much of the venerable edifice the ages had built as the forces at work could be induced to spare. There was no attempt at a return to the religion of Christ, only at the *re*-formation of the Church of England.

The incompleteness of the work in England made it an offence to many consciences. It seemed so mean and low and feeble compared with the completer work of Geneva, and it had been throughout so regulated by the spirit of expediency and statecraft, that men of a sterner and more ideal faith were irresistibly impelled beyond it. The Genevan model and its splendid success filled many with admiration; they pleaded in its behalf with sovereign and people, and zealously worked for its adoption in England.

But by-and-by it became evident to a few that Geneva had gone to work in the wrong way, had alike in its ideal and its method gone beyond the New to the Old Testament. Its aim had been to realize a Mosaic rather than a Christian State, to fulfil the dream of David rather than of Paul, to institute a *θεοκρατία* rather than *ἐκκλησίαι*, assemblies of free and enfranchized Christian men. But the new ideal was a complete return to the religion of Christ, to the method and aims of His apostles. The primitive simplicity was held to be the secret of primitive power; depending on the civil magistrate, working by his arm and through his agents meant being commanded by his expediencies rather than by Christ's mind and truth. The kingdom of God was a kingdom of the godly; the Church of Christ was a society of Christians. It must be enlarged and maintained in his way, not in the way of Queen Elizabeth or James the Wise. The Church of Christ in England could not be a creation of the sovereign of England, to be changed and arranged as a much-marrying Henry or a fanatical Mary might determine. It was Christ's, and His way must be followed if His ideal was to be realized. And what was His way? He did not ask Herod, who was quite as respectable a person as Henry, to help Him. He did not implore the consent and aid of the chief priests, who were in their own place and day quite as potent and capable persons as the Anglican bishops. He did not appeal for counsel and co-operation to Pilate, who, measured by his age and people, was the equal of Thomas Cromwell or William Cecil. But He established His kingdom, He created His Church by His word of power. He preached His truth on the hill-side, on the Galilean lake, or by its shore, to the publican sitting at the receipt of custom or looking down from the sycamore tree, to the few who met in the home of women who loved much, to the crowds that gathered

round Him in the way, or in the temple, or in the chief places of concourse, and out of the men who heard, believed, and obeyed, His kingdom was constituted, His Church formed. It was a "kingdom of the truth," and only those who were "of the truth" heard His voice. To use the agencies and instruments of imperial Rome or of sacerdotal Judæa had made His kingdom a "kingdom of this world" rather than of heaven. And as with Him, so with His apostles; they were preachers, created churches by the word of the Cross, and out of men who believed. Paul might reason with Felix, but it was of "righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come," not about the most fitting way of establishing churches. Peter might be condemned by the great council to silence, but he declared that he must "obey God rather than men, and could not but speak the things which he had heard." And, it was argued, as then, so now, the only true Christianity is Christ's, the only right method the method followed by Him and His apostles. Restore the truth and way of the New Testament, and the glory of the apostolic age will return.

This roughly and dimly, but truly, represents the mind of the early Independents. Their aim was to realize the ideal of the apostolic age, to follow Christ's way in order that they might reach His religion. It is a great mistake to imagine that their notion was exhausted in the thesis—the apostolic polity is the authoritative and normative polity for all time. Their contention really was, We cannot get at the apostolic religion without going back to the apostolic polity; it must be restored if the religion which Christ instituted and His apostles preached is to be attained. In their idea of the Church there were four determinative elements. A church is (1) a society of the godly, or of men who truly believe and piously live. (2) It is a society instituted expressly to realize in the personal

and collective life the religious ideals of Christ. (3) It is capable of extension only by means that produce faith, of development only by agencies that create godliness. (4) It is autonomous and authoritative, possessed of the freedom necessary to the fulfilment of its mission, the realization of its ideals, endowed with all the legislative and administrative powers needed for the maintenance of order and the attainment of progress. In their idea of religion the same four elements reappeared. Godliness was a matter for the individual conscience; its realization the most general, but the most imperative of duties; its extension the common obligation of the godly, and the godly alone; and its sovereignty over every godly man and society absolute and supreme. These ideas were all organically connected; they represented no sectional nostrums, but a complete ideal of man, society and religion, of the way and the end of Christ. In these ideas Robert Browne, Barrow, Greenwood, Francis Johnson, Henry Ainsworth, John Robinson, Henry Jacob, and all the early Independents, agreed. They believed that every society of godly men gathered together in order to worship God in Christ was a church. They believed that every church was gathered that it might be a society organized according to the principles of Christ, pervaded by His Spirit, living entirely for His ends. They believed that the kingdom of God was to come, not by the action of the magistrate or the political inclusion of whole parishes, but by the pure preaching and godly living of the faithful. They believed that societies so created and constituted were independent; only as they were so could they obey the conscience God illumined, could they build up a society after the ideal of Christ; and so over them in matters religious neither bishop nor presbytery nor magistrate could have any authority to exercise coercion or control.

Now it would be interesting to compare this indepen-

dent polity, in its first crude conception, with the Anglican and Genevan polities. Here, for example, is Hooker's fine statement of his idea :

"We hold that, seeing there is not any man of the Church of England but the same man is also a member of the Commonwealth, nor any member of the Commonwealth which is not also of the Church of England, therefore as in a figure triangle the base doth differ from the sides thereof, and yet one and the self-same line is both a base and also a side; a side simply, a base if it chance to be the bottom and underlie the rest: so, albeit proportions and actions of one do cause the name of a Commonwealth, qualities and functions of another sort the name of the Church, to be given to a multitude, yet one and the self-same multitude may in such sort be both."*

How comprehensive and large-minded this seems! What a splendid idea of a Church—immense, complex, varied, rich with a nation's resources, and strong in the strength of its massive and masterly genius, especially when placed alongside the mean and ignoble "company of believers," or "covenanted society of the faithful," which was all the despised Brownists had to offer in its place! But fill out the two ideas, and then let us see which is the sublimer. Were the Church but a State, were it laden with no universal and eternal truths richer and diviner than the thoughts of any people; did it bear no transcendental ideas and ambitions of a range so infinite as to shame into insignificance the aims and aspirations of the most exalted nations; did it care no more for character than the State cares; were its honours reserved for capacity and favour rather than saintliness, then Hooker's idea might be as noble as the other is poor and mean. But the Church of England is infinitely more than even the Commonwealth of England. To Hooker each was but a polity, a political system into which the English people had been formed or organized. He says, indeed, "We

* *Ecclesiastical Polity*, vol. ii. p. 382. (Ed. 1825.)

name a society a Commonwealth in regard of some regiment or policy under which men live ; a Church for the truth of that religion which they profess." * But the fundamental points in his distinction he forgot in his discussion. To profess a religion is a personal act, must be voluntarily and consciously done to be done at all ; but this was precisely what could not happen or be allowed to happen in Hooker's theory of the Church. To him " one society is both the Church and Commonwealth," † and, as a necessary result, " our Church hath dependence from the chief in our Commonwealth." But this was to transform the profession of religion into a matter of loyalty, and to identify Nonconformity with rebellion. Responsibility to the king supplanted responsibility to God, godliness became a species of political obedience, and the Church was emptied of its transcendental and ethical ideals that it might be organized into a system which was all the more civil that it was so intensely sacerdotal.

But now let us turn to the idea that looks so mean beside Hooker's majestic conception. Independency said, A Church is a company of believers, a covenanted society of the godly. But what did this signify ? Did it not articulate a conception of God, of His methods and ends, of the dignity of man, of an unrealized but realizable spiritual order, far sublimer than was expressed in Hooker's ecclesiastical ideal ? The systems must be judged not by their immediate and sensible attributes, but by their inherent principles, essential tendencies, and ultimate results. The Anglican emphasized the idea of the Church, its unity, authority, order ; but the Independent emphasized the idea of religion, the personal relation of God to the soul and the soul to God, aimed at making it feel in every moment, for every act, directly responsible

* *Ecclesiastical Polity*, vol. ii. p. 386.† *Ibid.* p. 389.

to Him, embosomed in the Infinite, a child of the Eternal, able to use all sensuous things, even such as were sacred, as means of discipline or instruments of godliness, but never as necessities for the spirit. The Anglican dwelt fondly on the notion of political uniformity and a political obedience, a uniform law in Church as in State, with its graded orders and regulated ministries, each created and sanctioned by acts political while ecclesiastical; but the Independent loved the dream of spiritual unity and moral obedience, held enforced uniformity to be the mother of hypocrisy and all unrealities, fiercely hated the ecclesiastical conformity that too often allowed, and even rewarded, a faith without godliness, strenuously disbelieved in the sanctity of sensuous forms in religion, and orders created or dignities conferred by ordination, and as strenuously believed in the sanctity of saintliness and the priesthood of universal Christian man. The Anglican made obedience to the Church a question for the magistrate, bound the sovereign and the Church in relations that placed the sovereign above its discipline and placed the Church under his authority; but the Independent made obedience to God the distinctive characteristic of the religious, the Church independent of the magistrate, the sovereign able to exercise no authority over it, with no standing in it as a prince, only as a man, as such amenable to it for his conduct, liable, like other men, to censure for ungodliness, or to honour if he did well. The ideals were opposites, but Independency had throughout incomparably the nobler, where understood, appealing most mightily at once to the conscience and imagination of man. It seized with unexampled force the ethical significance of religion, bound godliness to faith, and made conformity to the Divine will the supreme condition of continuance in the Church. It held in the loftiest scorn the systems that magnified office, that revered dignity rather than charac-

ter, that enforced Church discipline as if it were a matter of civil law, and was more jealous of the order of the magistrate than the honour of God. And with all the blended energy and patience of large conviction, it laboured in obscurity and amid reproach to make religion the concern of the religious, to persuade the godly to live unto God and for man, to form themselves into brotherhoods, to live in amity towards each other, in fidelity to the State, and in righteousness towards all men. And they so believed and lived in the hope that thus the kingdom of God would most surely come, and His will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

But now, how did this Independent or Congregational polity affect the religion of Christ and the attempt at its realization? In order to answer this question we must exhibit the polity, not only in itself, but also as it interpreted and represented religion alike to man and society, to the individual and the State. Our space permits us to notice only a few salient points.

1. The first thing to be noticed is this, the polity was the complete negation of sacerdotalism with its political and religious bases, the affirmation that religion was altogether spiritual, and real only as realized in the spirit and in the truth. The priesthood of all believers is the only one Independency knows; its only sacrifices are those of spiritual service. It will allow no official person to stand between the soul and God; they two must meet each other face to face. The great man is the teacher and preacher, not the priest but the prophet, able to exercise his office only by right of a Divine vocation, with no right to it unless the vocation be manifestly Divine. His function is so to speak the truth in love as to speak it in power, so to preach as to save souls, so to teach as to enlighten and sanctify saints. Faith is the first thing demanded from every man; on personal conviction alone can a real re-

ligious experience be built. Doctrine is thus restored to its rightful place, made the vital centre of the whole system. The religion of Christ lived at first not as a political organization, but by the truths that persuaded the intellect and commanded the conscience. It created a new life because it gave new convictions ; it renewed the man by the renewal of his whole intellectual and spiritual world. And the distinctive note of Independency was its direct appeal to the conscience and reason, its presentation of religion as the truth or series of truths that should reconcile man with God and with the Divine order, and enable him to live in obedience to the eternal law of righteousness. The first and supreme thing was this reconciliation with God. Man could never be right in his human relations so long as he was wrong in his Divine. He could never hold his proper place in society, or fulfil his highest duties until he lived in harmony with the order God had instituted. The passion for the Church as a political organization was to Independency a mean ambition ; its passion was for the kingdom of God, for the obedience worked through faith in the truth and realized in righteousness.

Its personal ideals in religion were all ethical. It believed in the ethics of Jesus, in His sermon on the mount as an obligatory law, designed for obedience and capable of being obeyed, loved His light, struggled after His sweetness, and endeavoured to find and walk in the way of His truth ; believed in the apostolic politics, held the brotherhood of believers to be a fact that ought to lie at the basis and regulate the relations and actions of all the living units built into the society called a Church ; thought the saintliest must also be the sanest, the most reasonable and honourable men ; trusted in the promise of an indwelling Spirit, possessed by each, distributed through all, making even the lowliest company of the godly a goodly

“fellowship of saints.” And the Independents loved even unto death the polity which enabled them to live and struggle for their ideal, for without it they did not see how their religion could ever be the religion of Christ.

2. But a no less important point was the way in which it interpreted and represented religion to Society and the State. It may be said to have introduced a new conception of the relation of religion to the magistrate; of religion, I say, rather than of the Church. It was a denial of the magistrates' authority over religion, an assertion of its authority over him. These stood indissolubly together, were but the negative and positive aspects of the same idea. Religion was too Divine a thing to be used by any mere political person for political purposes, to be ordered and administered in the methods and for the ends of the mere statesman; it was an authority so absolute and universal as to require equal obedience in all persons and estates, as to be incapable of accepting any homage other than godliness. Over against the Anglican idea of conformity to the ecclesiastical institution it placed the idea of conformity to the Divine will, with all that it implied as to the supremacy of conscience, the sacredness of personal convictions, the right of the individual reason or judgment, the inviolable sanctity of the region where God ruled and man obeyed. This was an idea that made religion a new force in the State. It was equal to its political enfranchisement. Hitherto it had been imprisoned, as it were, in a body politic. By Catholicism it had been identified with the papal system, and the often immoral will of the Church had been enforced on men and states as the will of God. By Anglicanism it had been incorporated in a State Church, which made spiritual too nearly the equivalent of civil obedience, and too much respected or depended on the sovereign to be able to assert the supreme right and authority of religion. But

with Independency all was different. The polity was unable to command or coerce in the State, and it declared the State could not command or coerce in religion the pious and tender conscience of the godly. It could not become an organized political unity without ceasing to be. Corporate action was so impossible to it that it escaped the fatal temptation of the Free Churches, that they be permitted to legislate for a State that they will not allow to legislate for them. The strength of Independency was, as it were, its weakness as a body. It had no ecclesiastical ambitions; its ambitions were all religious. In the churches, godliness was the great thing; its creation and development their supreme duty. Men who believed were bound to be good; good men were the salt of the earth, needful to its weal. Happiness was possible only as holiness was realized; and as to the pure all things were pure, so the righteous man must be righteous in everything, a saint while a citizen, a citizen while a saint. And so Independency forced to the front the idea that the convinced, pious, God-fearing man was the best citizen, that his duty was to make the State as religious as himself, which it could be, not by enforced conformity, but by becoming just in its laws, upright in its judgments, righteous in its conduct at home and abroad. As its Church was a society of saints, its State ideal was a nation of righteous men living and acting righteously. Cromwell's model army, composed of men of spirit, convinced, devout men, who fought as unto God, expressed the mind and pursued the method of Independency. Its strong and true belief, sublime as true, was, Create righteous citizens, and the State will realize righteousness; and with less than righteousness everywhere it could not be satisfied. For as Milton, its great poet and prophet, has fitly said, "A Commonwealth ought to be but as one huge Christian personage, one mighty

growth and stature of an honest man, as big and compact in virtue as in body; for look, what the grounds and causes are of single happiness to one man, the same ye shall find them to a whole State." * The whole life, public and private, penetrated and regulated by religion unto righteousness is the Independent ideal.

3. But this interpretation of the relation of religion to the State has, as its necessary counterpart, a new interpretation of the relation in which the State ought to stand to religion. The obligation to godliness for the nation and individual alike was not the only thing Independency emphasized; it emphasized no less the immediacy and inviolable sanctity of the relations in which religion and conscience stand, and ought to be allowed to stand, to each other. While it affirmed the lordship of the conscience over the magistrate, it denied the lordship of the magistrate over the conscience; and so by placing religion, not as organized polity, but as the authoritative and normative principle of life, over the State, refused to the State the right either to institute or regulate, to alter or control the religion. Lecky † has argued that toleration is the child of scepticism, possible only in an age when men have grown conscious of the difficulties that beset belief. But here he errs. Toleration is not only possible, but necessary, the moment religion is made a matter for the conscience rather than the magistrate, but impossible the moment it becomes an affair of the magistrate rather than the conscience. The period of most victorious certainty in the Christian Church was also the period when it most strenuously pleaded for religious freedom. The Fathers before Constantine understood that men compelled to embrace a religion were only coerced into hypocrisy, and

* *Of Reformation in England*, book ii. p. 11. Works. (Ed. 1834.)

† *History of Rationalism in Europe*, vol. ii. p. 56 ff. (5th Ed.)

they reprov'd the persecutions of Rome by affirming the supremacy of the conscience. So Tertullian argued * that to take away religious liberty and forbid free choice of worship was to promote impiety, for no man, much less a god, would care for a compulsory, which could only be a hateful because hated, homage. And again, he maintains † that it is a common human right and prerogative of nature that every man should worship God according to his own convictions; that it is no religious thing to compel to religion, which must be spontaneously embraced to be embraced at all. And the older faith had in the hour of fatal transition its witnesses in the noblest of the then Fathers. So Athanasius: ‡ “It is an evidence that men want confidence in their own faith, when they use force and constrain men against their wills. It is the devil’s method, because there is no truth in him, to work with hatchet and sword.” And Hilary of Poitiers lamented § the degeneracy of the days when the Divine faith was recommended by an appeal to an earthly name, and the name of Christ made to seek the protection of a crowned head, as if He Himself had become impotent and helpless. Finely he told Constantius: || “You govern that all may enjoy sweet liberty; only by permitting each to live wholly according to his own convictions can peace be restored to the Church.” “God is the Lord of the universe, and requires not an obedience which is forced;” and he even charged ¶ the emperor with burdening the altar of God with the gold of the State. And Lactantius,** in a noble and eloquent passage, argued that only reason, never compulsion, availed in religion, which could be

* *Apologeticus*, c. 24. † *Ad Scapulam*, c. 2.

‡ *Hist. Arian.* § 3.

§ *Contra Arianos*, ii. 594. (Ed. Veron. 1730.)

|| *Ad Constant.* lib. i. c. 1.

¶ *Ibid.* i. 10.

** *Instit. Div.*, v. 20.

defended not by slaying, but by dying; not by wasting, but by suffering; not by injustice, but by fidelity. Nothing was so much a matter of free choice as religion: where the heart does not love to serve, there it is not.

Now the Fathers who so argued believed religion to be spiritual; what they argued against was its materialization by the power over it being transferred from the spirits where it lived and reigned to the imperial cabinet, where intrigue held sway and Churchmen lost in the game of politics the simplicity of their early faith and character. An imperial policy disguised in ecclesiastical terms and forms can never be tolerant; a spirit devoted to godliness, hating as radically evil and futile all ungodly methods and means for promoting it, can never be intolerant. Independency, as an endeavour to realize the most ancient and least political Christianity, broke with the coercive policy which the political incorporation of Church and State had made inevitable. The first English Independent declared that "to compel religion, to plant churches by power, and to force submission to ecclesiastical government by laws and penalties, belonged not" to the magistrate. The Lord's people were "of the willing sort," driven by "conscience and not the power of man." And so he held that magistrates had as such "no authority over the Church," but "only to rule the commonwealth in all outward justice."* And these principles, as fundamental to Independency, found in its earliest literature more or less complete expression. Barrow and Greenwood maintained that "Christ was the only head of His Church;" that "His laws no man may alter;" that while it was "the duty of the prince to inquire out and renew the laws of God," yet in matters of religion con-

* Robert Browne. *Treatise of Reformation without Tarying for Anie*, pp. 11, 12, 15.

science must be obeyed, "though all the princes of the world should prohibit the same upon pain of death." *

John Robinson argued that "civil causes" could never "bring forth spiritual effects," and that "compulsive laws" might create hypocrisy, but never the spirit that "received the word gladly." † Henry Jacob, when he returned to found the Church at Southwark, pleaded with King James for toleration, prayed that pious tender consciences might be left free to serve God in their own way. In his very notion of the Church the principle was contained which had been so well and boldly stated a year or so before by the Anglo-Dutch Baptists: "The magistrate is not to meddle with religion, or matters of conscience, nor to compel men to this or that form of religion, because Christ is the King and Lawgiver of the Church and conscience."

The history of toleration in England has still to be written. It does not fall within our province to trace even its main outlines. One thing is certain, whatever may have been the dream—so sadly contradicted by his practice—of Sir Thomas More, it was as an actual and realizable ideal the creation of Independency. The two branches into which it so soon divided, the Congregational and Baptist, may have at first differed as regards the rigorous statement and vigorous application of the principle. The Church of Helwys was more thoroughgoing than the Church of Jacob. The tracts of Busher and Murton were more logical and unqualified in their notion and doctrine of religious liberty than were the expositions of the scholarly and scholastic Ainsworth, or the discussions of the sober and large-minded Robinson. Hanserd Knollys and Roger Williams held and suffered

* Dexter's *Congregationalism of the Last Three Hundred Years*, Lect. iv.

† Works, ii. 488.

for a toleration far more complete and comprehensive than was desired by Philip Nye or Thomas Goodwin. Many things may help to explain the difference. The Baptists learned much from their Dutch friends, both Arminian and Mennonite, while the Dutch theological affinities and relationships of the Congregationalists tended altogether in an opposite direction. But these are points that do not concern us: this alone does—the toleration, qualified or unqualified, was in each case based on the new ideal of religion and the Church. The new ideal of religion proclaimed the rights of the individual conscience; the new idea of the Church its duties and obligations. The main matter was no longer uniformity, but reality—not the organization of religious forms, but the conversion of the soul and the regulation of the life by truths directly believed and completely obeyed. And the significant matter is that, save on this ground, toleration can never be, and has never been, logically claimed and defended by a man believing religion to be true. In the history of liberal religious thought in England, no three names are more honoured and more worthy of honour than those of William Chillingworth, Jeremy Taylor, and John Locke; but Churchmen though they were, each is an illustrious proof of our thesis. Chillingworth's great service was to oppose to the idea of the Church and its authority the idea that "the Bible, and the Bible only, is the religion of Protestants." And this religion is one that authority cannot interpret, only "right reason," *i.e.*, it must be interpreted by the conscience for the conscience.* Taylor's great argument for freedom—"Liberty of prophesying," as he finely calls it—is based on the nature of faith, and toleration is made dutiful because faith is rational, lives by persuasion, not by politics. His work

* Works, ii. 170, 404, 411, but par. 38, 39. (Oxford Ed.)

convinces in the degree that it limits the authority of the Church and affirms the rights of the reason. The Church, he says, "has power to intend our faith, but not to extend it, to make our belief more evident, but not more large and comprehensive." She has no power to declare any article "necessary which before was not necessary. By so doing she makes the narrow way to be even narrower, and chalks out one more path to the devil than he had before." * Locke's plea for toleration started from a conception of the Church he owed to Independency, was cogent in the very degree in which it logically developed and applied the conception. Take away the ideas of the essential voluntariness of religion and the religious society, and you take away the very basis of Locke's argument. Independency, then, prevailed over its enemies. The whole movement towards religious liberty has been a movement towards the realization of its ideal. The moment Chillingworth forgot his notion of the Christian religion, and acted in behalf of the ecclesiastical polity he believed, his theory broke down. Taylor the Churchman was a radical and embodied contradiction of Taylor the apologist for freedom. The Independent idea is the only sure basis for a theory of toleration, and in practice its only complete realization.

Here our discussion must end, though it only leads us to the threshold of a great subject—the action of Independency on the State and people and religion of England. The principles it embodies have been progressively victorious principles, ever securing more recognition and authority in the State, and ever making it a roomier and healthier home for reasonable and religious spirits. By what seems an act almost of inspired foresight, Independency set about creating the ideas, forming the societies,

* *Liberty of Prophesying*, Sec. i. cc. 12, 13.

and realizing the conditions best fitted to make religion a living moral power in the State, and to make the State stand in its proper relation to religion. And Providence has crowned its history with a success that more than rewards its now three centuries of obscurity, civil disability, and ecclesiastical conflict. Its success is not a thing of statistics ; figures could in no way represent it. It is embodied in the legislation, in the civil rights, in the religious liberties so slowly and so hardly won, in the political duties so strenuously fulfilled, in the public opinion and public conduct of the English people. Thanks mainly to Independency, the English people have learned that the State inimical to religious freedom is the worst enemy of religion ; that to tolerate only one Church in the State is to do the utmost injury to the Church of Jesus Christ. Nor are these its only services. No student of English history can deny that it created a new conscience for conduct in the English people, new qualities of character and types of virtue, and added some of the most illustrious names to the long roll of Christian heroes and saints. But while creating a loftier and more ethical ideal of the Christian man, it also lifted the conception of the Church of Jesus Christ, made it less civil and more spiritual, less political and more social, less sacerdotal and more moral. It placed religion above the sovereign as above the man, made the Church as a society independent of the State, but as the bearer of the ideals and truths, as the vehicle and exponent of the religion of Jesus Christ, related to the State as to the individual—related, that is, as the teacher and preacher of righteousness, with a commission which comes direct from the Eternal. The attitude of the Anglican Church to the sovereign was an inexpressible humiliation to the man who understood and believed and loved the ideal of Independency. It was so by virtue of the varied infidelities it involved. It con-

tradicted the fundamental principle of a return to the way and idea of Christ and His apostles. It offended the strong belief in the dignity, the spiritual kingdom and priesthood of every Christian man. It sinned against the profound conviction that a man who was a citizen in the kingdom of God, who held office and exercised rule in His Church, ought to be a godly man. It were almost impossible to enlighten the Anglican as to the feelings of the Independent who heard him maintain the thesis that an utter scapegrace like the second Charles, a crypto-Catholic to boot, was by the grace of God king of England and head of the English Church. It would have seemed to him too grotesque for impiety had it not been too bitter for tears. Time never inflicted a more deserved revenge than when it forced the Anglican to see a king by his own Divine right the head of his Church, while a catholic in profession and in deed. Yet it ought to have been a less humiliation than was the sight in the same position of his less honest and even more unclean crypto-Catholic brother. But humiliations of that sort could be suffered by Anglicanism alone, they were impossible to Independency. Strong in the faith that Christ was king, that where He reigned no sovereign had any right or title to interfere, that the surest note of a Christian man was his being obedient to Christ in all things, the surest note of the Christian Church its working in Christ's way for Christ's ends—the Independent lived through the old days of darkness into these days of light, and helped to make the day when it dawned the day of rich fruition, and richer promise we find it to be.

I.

THE EARLY INDEPENDENTS.

BY

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(BIRMINGHAM).

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I.

THE EARLY INDEPENDENTS.

THE subject assigned to me in the series of Lectures to be delivered this winter in connection with the Jubilee of the Congregational Union is "The Early Independents;" and I am expected to illustrate the history of English Congregationalism from its rise, in the first decade of the reign of Elizabeth, down to the outbreak of the civil war. But this was the heroic age of Congregationalism. To tell the story of the energy, daring, and endurance of our ecclesiastical ancestors, of the courage with which obscure men and women, defying the hostility of the bishops and the Crown, organized Congregational churches and celebrated Congregational worship; to illustrate the constancy and high spirit with which they submitted to fine, imprisonment, exile, death, rather than violate their loyalty to the great principles which, as they believed, God had committed to their trust; to describe the personal characteristics and to narrate the fortunes of all the principal Congregational leaders, would require a volume. I must do what I can: within the limits of a single lecture I can do very little.

In the first half of this lecture I propose to give some account of the personal history of the founders of English Congregationalism—to tell the story of their struggles and their sufferings—and to estimate as nearly as I can the extent of the impression which they produced on the

religious thought and life of England in their own time. In the second half, I propose to give some account of their religious and ecclesiastical opinions.

I.

We get one of the earliest glimpses of English Congregationalism in a letter written by Grindal, Bishop of London, to Bullinger at Zurich.

During the fierce persecution in Queen Mary's time a large number of learned and distinguished Protestants fled from England and took refuge in Strasburg, in Frankfort, in Geneva, in Zurich, and in other continental cities. After their return, on the death of Mary, many of them maintained a frequent correspondence with the famous foreign theologians whom they had come to know during their exile, and their letters contain valuable information on the ecclesiastical troubles and conflicts of the first twenty or five-and-twenty years of the reign of Elizabeth.

On June 11th, 1568, Grindal wrote to Bullinger with an anxious and sorrowful heart. Mary, Queen of Scots, had escaped from Lochleven; the troops she had raised had been defeated by the Regent; she had crossed the Solway, and she was now in what the bishop calls "honourable custody" in the castle of Carlisle. Her presence in England was a source of infinite perplexity and danger to the government. Bad news had just come from the Netherlands. When Grindal was about to seal his letter he heard that the Duke of Alva, the great terror of the Protestants all over Europe, had executed Count Egmont and Count Horn, and about twenty other noblemen. Ecclesiastical affairs in England, and even in his own diocese, were restless and unsatisfactory.

"Our controversy" (he says) "concerning the habits, about which you write, had cooled down for a time; but broke out again last

winter, and this by the means of some who are more zealous than they are either learned or gifted with pious discretion. Some London citizens of the lowest order, together with four or five ministers, remarkable neither for their judgment nor learning, have openly separated from us; and, sometimes in private houses, sometimes in the fields, and occasionally even in ships, they have held their meetings and administered the sacraments. Besides this, they have ordained ministers, elders, and deacons after their own way, and have even excommunicated some who had seceded from their church. And because Laurence Humphrey, Sampson, Lever, and others, who have suffered so much to obtain liberty in respect of things indifferent, will not unite with them, they now regard them as semipapists, and will not allow their followers to attend their preaching. The number of this sect is about two hundred, but consisting of more women than men. The Privy Council have lately committed the heads of this faction to prison, and are using every means to put a timely stop to this sect." *

Humphrey, to whom Grindal refers, was known to Bullinger. He had been at Zurich during the exile. Soon after his return to England he was made President of Magdalen College, Oxford, and Regius Professor of Divinity in that University. He was a man of great piety and learning. Sampson was not less distinguished. He was one of the Strasburg exiles; on Elizabeth's accession he had declined a bishopric because of his scruples about the vestments, but had accepted the deanery of Christ Church, Oxford. He was known to Bullinger by reputation and by correspondence. Lever had been Master of St. John's College, Cambridge, in Edward the Sixth's time, and he had visited Bullinger at Zurich during the Marian persecution. To continental Protestants it seemed most lamentable and not very intelligible that men so eminent as these should be worried and persecuted by the ecclesiastical authorities, while their former companions in exile—Grindal and Parkhurst and Sandys—

* *Zurich Letters* (Parker Society), p. 201.

were bishops. Bullinger and Gualter had written a formal letter to these three bishops on the subject.

Nothing was more likely to prevent Bullinger and his friends in Switzerland from cherishing any sympathy for the sect which was now troubling the bishops and the Privy Council than to say that its adherents regarded men like Humphrey, Sampson, and Lever as semi-papists. This information was likely to make Bullinger very indifferent both to their principles and to their fate. It must have seemed certain that they were mere fanatics—very ignorant and very wild. But for us who are trying to investigate the history of the early Independents, these unfortunate persons, who were “London citizens of the lowest order,” among whom there were “more women than men,” and whose ministers had so little judgment and so little learning, happen to be exceptionally interesting.

About fifteen months before Grindal wrote the letter from which I have quoted there had been a very memorable scene at Lambeth Palace. The Queen had become impatient with the irregularities of the clergy, and had given a peremptory order to the archbishop to compel them to wear the appointed habits and to celebrate the appointed ceremonies. He and Grindal required the clergy of London, who seem to have been more restless than their brethren in other parts of the kingdom, to meet them and to declare their intention to conform. Sixty-one promised submission; thirty-seven absolutely refused. Those who refused were sequestered, and were menaced with deprivation if they did not yield within three months. Among the sequestered clergy were some of the most popular preachers.

This blow produced an immense impression throughout the kingdom: it filled some with dismay; it provoked some to fierce resentment. It strengthened if it did not

originate a more formidable kind of resistance to the ecclesiastical authority of the Crown than it was intended to repress. The Queen heard that secret meetings for worship were being held in private houses, and that the illegal congregations had ministers of their own who administered the sacraments. The Ecclesiastical Commissioners were told that these congregations must be suppressed, and on June 19th, 1567, the sheriff's officers caught about a hundred men and women in the very act of celebrating worship in Plumber's Hall, in the city of London. They had hired the hall under pretence of having a wedding party there, but really with the intention of hearing a sermon and receiving the Lord's Supper. The next day some of them were brought before the Bishop, the Lord Mayor, the Dean of Westminster, and the Archdeacon of Middlesex. The examination of the prisoners throws light on their ecclesiastical position. One of them said to the Commissioners, "You preach Christ to be Priest and Prophet, but you preach Him not to be King, neither will you suffer Him to reign with the sceptre of His word in His Church alone; but the Pope's canon law and the will of the Prince must have the first place, and be preferred before the word and ordinance of Christ." They also appealed to the well-known passage in Matt. xviii. 15-18, in which Christ tells His disciples how they were to deal with an erring brother, as showing Christ's mind about the discipline of the Church. Of course they complained vehemently of the popish vestments. Thirty-one of them—twenty-four men and seven women—were kept in Bridewell for a year, and were discharged about the time that Grindal was writing to Bullinger.

We have some further information about several of the persons who were arrested at Plumber's Hall. Dr. Waddington discovered an interesting document, dated

1571, in which the members of a secret congregation appeal to their countrymen to return to God and pray that the Queen's Highness may be disposed by the Holy Spirit to "cast down all the places of idolatry within her land, with the popish canon law, and all the superstition and commandments of men, and pluck up by the root all filthy ceremonies pertaining to the same; and that her Highness may send forth princes and ministers and give them the Book of the Lord, that they may bring home the people of God to the purity and truth of the Apostolic Church." The twenty-seven persons whose names are appended to this document describe themselves as "a poor congregation whom God hath separated from the Church of England and from the mingled and false worshipping therein used, out of which assemblies the Lord our only Saviour hath called us and still calleth, saying, 'Come out from among them . . . and touch no unclean thing, then will I receive you, and I will be your God, and you shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord.'" They say that, in addition to worshipping God every Sabbath day in private houses, they meet on the fourth day in every week, to offer prayer, and to exercise discipline on them which do deserve it, by the strength and sure warrant of the Lord God's word, as in Matt. xviii. 16, 17; 1 Cor. v. 45. They have had great trouble. Their minister Richard Fitz, their deacon Thomas Rowland, and some of their private members, have been killed by long imprisonment.* Dr. Waddington also discovered a short paper signed by Richard Fitz himself, in which he states the objects for which this secret church was founded.†

Now of the twenty-seven persons who signed this appeal

* Waddington's *Congregational Martyrs*, pp. 12, 14.

† Ibid.

in 1571, seven appear to have been among the Bridewell prisoners caught at Plumber's Hall in 1567,* and Thomas Rowland, the deacon, who was dead when the appeal was signed, was one of the prisoners. From the information contained in this document, combined with that afforded by the examination of the same persons before the Commissioners, it appears—

1. That about 1567 there was a secret and regularly organized church in the city of London, and that Richard Fitz was minister of the church, and Thomas Rowland one of its deacons.

2. That the church met for worship on Sunday, and met on Wednesday for prayer and church discipline.

3. That the members of this secret society objected to the English Church as settled by Elizabeth on three grounds:

- (a) In the English Church the Pope's canon law and the will of the Prince set aside the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ.

- (b) The vestments and ceremonies of the English Church were idolatrous and superstitious.

- (c) The English Church was without scriptural discipline.

Grindal's letter makes it probable that there were several secret societies of the same kind in the city of London. If the "faction" numbered two hundred, it was hardly possible for them all to meet together as one church without immediate detection; and his description implies, I think, that there were several distinct churches each with its own ministers, elders, and deacons. The service in Plumber's Hall seems to have been a special one.

* Five of the Christian names do not correspond, but it was very possible for the Christian names of the Bridewell prisoners to be erroneously recorded. Rowland is described as Bowland in *Part of a Register*, p. 23.

Perhaps the separate churches wished to meet together to celebrate the Lord's Supper, and the hall was hired because in the private houses in which they usually met there was no room large enough for the united meeting.

It is not clear, however, that these separatists had as yet developed any very definite theory of church polity. They seem to have been Congregationalists in their practice, but there is nothing to show that they held the theory of Congregationalism. Indeed, if the ceremonies and vestments which offended Puritan scruples had not been enforced, many of them would probably have continued to attend their parish churches. This appears from the evidence given before the Commissioners by John Smith, one of the prisoners. He said :

"So long as we might have the word freely preached, and the sacraments administered without the preferring of idolatrous gear above it, we never assembled together in houses. But when it came to this point, that all our preachers were displaced by your law that would not subscribe to your apparel and your law, so that we could not hear none of them in any church by the space of seven or eight weeks, except Father Coverdale, of whom we have a good opinion, and yet, God knoweth, the man was so fearful that he durst not be known unto us where he preached, though we sought it at his house; and then were we troubled and commanded to your courts from day to day, for not coming to your parish churches: then we bethought ourselves that there was a congregation of us in this city in Queen Mary's days."

And so it was resolved to set up private worship, and to use—not the English Book of Common Prayer—but a Service Book "approved by that godly and well-learned man, John Calvin;" a book which, as Smith reminds the Commissioners, had been used by the congregation of exiles at Geneva. There was considerable point in this last remark; for some of these exiles were now occupying safe places in the English Church. What had been acceptable to God in Geneva could hardly be offensive to Him in London.

It may therefore be assumed that the London separatists had no clear and strong convictions on questions of ecclesiastical polity. They left the English Church because they could not tolerate what they regarded as the idolatrous and popish vestments and ceremonies which were being enforced by the Queen and the bishops. They became Congregationalists by the force of circumstances, and before they knew anything of the principles of Congregationalism.

There are traces or traditions of Congregational churches which had a brief and precarious existence in other parts of the kingdom in the early part of the reign of Elizabeth. Such churches seem to have been formed at Norwich, at Chatham, and in the "west parts of England," probably at Gloucester;* but it is probable that the persons by whom these churches were established had just as little knowledge of the Congregational theory as the London separatists.

If the scruples of the moderate Puritans had been humoured, if the clergy had not been compelled to wear the surplice, to make the sign of the cross in baptism, and to use the ring in marriage, most of the early separatists might have been retained in the English Church. But when they had been driven out and had been compelled to set up secret churches, they soon discovered that there were deeper, wider, and far graver objections to the constitution and order of the English Church than those which had led to their separation.

It was not, however, till fourteen years after the service in Plumber's Hall that the principles of Congregationalism were clearly and effectively taught in this country. In

* See Dexter's *Congregationalism of the last Three Hundred Years*, page 634, and the Preface to *A True Confession of the Faith* in 1596, in which there is a reference to the persecution of Brownists at Gloucester.

April, 1581, Dr. Freke, Bishop of Norwich, wrote to Burleigh, the Lord Treasurer, about the conventicles which were being held in his diocese by Robert Browne, who was a kinsman of Burleigh's. Browne was at this time thirty or thirty-five years of age, a man of audacious intellect, vehement temperament, and a vigorous preacher. He was agitating all Norfolk and Suffolk by his theories about the true constitution of the Church of Christ, and by his attacks on the English Establishment. Magistrates and persons of rank, as well as the common people, were carried away by his boldness, earnestness, and eloquence. He held meetings in town after town in the eastern parts of England, and wherever he went he kindled flames, which the bishop regarded with dismay. The bishop's officers tried to prevent the meetings from being held; but the arrangements for holding them were kept so secret that the officers were baffled. In the course of the summer Browne was caught and imprisoned, but was liberated on the interference of Burleigh. As soon as he was free he began holding his meetings again, and the bishop, who was afraid that his whole diocese would be infected with Browne's pernicious principles, wrote again to the Lord Treasurer about his troublesome kinsman, entreating his lordship's help "in suppressing him entirely." Towards the close of the year or early in 1582 Browne settled at Middleburg, in Zeeland. Fifty or sixty persons of his own way of thinking went with him—among them his friend, Robert Harrison, master of a hospital at Norwich, with whom Browne had been living. At Middleburg the exiles formed a Congregational church, with Browne for pastor and Harrison for doctor or teacher.

It was from Browne that Congregationalists received their first distinctive name. To Churchmen and Presbyterians in the time of Elizabeth and James I. we were "Brownists." For a few years the earlier description

seems to have been partially displaced, and we were sometimes called "Barrowists," after Henry Barrowe, but to Browne belongs the honour of reviving in England the principles of the polity of the primitive and apostolic church; and it was a true instinct which for several generations led those who wished to speak of us with scorn to brand us with his name. I remember that my predecessor used occasionally to receive letters addressed, "John Angell James, Brownist Teacher;" and there are writers in church newspapers who still think it courteous to describe us as Brownists.

Let me frankly acknowledge—the candour costs me no great effort—that Robert Browne appears to have lived a disreputable life—after he ceased to be a Congregationalist and took a living in the English Church. For the sake of the honour of the Church of England I should be very glad to accept the theory of Dr. Dexter, who thinks that during the second half of his life he was in a state bordering on insanity, and was hardly responsible for his actions. Whether this disordered condition of mind preceded or followed his appointment to a living in the diocese of Peterborough, Dr. Dexter does not attempt to determine. Whatever the truth may be, the vices attributed to Browne cover us with no dishonour. They concern the Church of England, not ourselves. While he was a Congregationalist he appears to have been an excellent Christian, rough in his speech, after the manner of those times, but free from all moral reproach, and a man of intense and fervent religious zeal.

He belonged to an ancient Rutlandshire family, and was born at Toilethorpe, in that county, towards the end of the reign of Henry VIII. or early in the reign of Edward VI. He was educated at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. Where he settled when he left the University is unknown. It has been generally said that he became

chaplain to the Duke of Norfolk. But this was impossible, and the statement rests on a blunder of Strype's.*

In a pathetic account of his life written by Browne himself, and discovered by Dr. Dexter in the Archbishop's Library at Lambeth, I find no reference to any chaplaincy. He says that for three years after leaving Cambridge he was a schoolmaster, but he does not say where; that while he was a schoolmaster he got into trouble with the preacher of the town and with some of the people, through his attempts to put in practice those principles of religious reformation for which he had already suffered some things at the University. He was dismissed from the school as the result of this hostility, but continued to teach in the same town till the plague came and his friends in Rutlandshire were alarmed and sent for him to come home. After living with his father for a short time he returned to Cambridge, or its immediate neighbourhood, to study theology with a Puritan clergyman named Greenham. Certain persons in Cambridge, with the consent of the Mayor and the Vice-Chancellor, invited him to remain in the town, and to preach in one of the churches. But by this time he had grasped the central principle of the Congregational polity, and he states it in a very startling form. If he was to accept any church office he must be called to it by the Church; but where could he recognize the authority of the Church? Not in the bishops appointed by the Crown; this seemed to him an impossible hypothesis. Christ, he said, is the Head of the Church; and immediately under Christ are those who believe in Him and are one with Him. "The voice of the whole people, guided by the elders and forwardest," is, for Browne, "the voice of God." And therefore "the meeting together of many churches, also of every whole church, and of the elders

* See note at the end of this Lecture.

therein, is above the apostle, above the prophet, the evangelist, the pastor, the teacher, and every particular elder." He saw, too, that the organization of the Church by parishes was wholly inconsistent with the true conception of a Christian Church. "He judged," to quote his own words, "that the kingdom of God was not to be begun by whole parishes, but rather of the worthiest, were they never so few."

With his heart all on fire with these revolutionary ideas, he went to Norwich. And these were the ideas which, in secret meetings in every part of Norfolk and Suffolk, he expounded and enforced with a free and flowing and impetuous eloquence, not without fierce attacks on the bishops and clergy of the Queen's Church. Nor did he spare the Puritan ministers. It seemed to him that the Puritans shrank from carrying out their own principles; they asserted that Christ was the only King of the Church, and yet submitted to a discipline and celebrated a worship which, in their own judgment, Christ condemned. For this inconsistency and this cowardice he reserved his most fiery denunciations. No wonder that the two counties burst into flame. No wonder that within twelve months it became apparent that even the powerful protection of his great relative, Lord Burleigh, could not save him from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. As we have seen, he and Harrison crossed to Middleburg, and with them went sixty of the members of the church which had been gathered at Norwich.

At Middleburg both Harrison and Browne began to print. In 1582 Browne published his principal work, under the title, *A Book which sheweth the Life and Manner of all true Christians, and how unlike they are to Turks and Papists and Heathen Folk, &c.* It is a manual of theological doctrine, ethics, and ecclesiastical principles, and was obviously intended for the use of church members. In the

same year he published a vigorous pamphlet, the spirit and contents of which may be judged from the title, *Of Reformation without tarrying for any; and of the wickedness of those Preachers who will not reform themselves and their charge because they will tarry till the Magistrate command and compel them.*

How long he remained in Middleburg is uncertain; the pamphlet in which he tells the story of his life contains no dates. But within a year or two a quarrel broke out between Harrison and himself; the church was split into parties; all attempts to restore peace failed.

Harrison remained, and was the pastor of the exiles till his death. Browne returned to this country. In the early part of 1584 he was alarming the Presbyterians in Scotland with what seemed to them the wildest talk about the true constitution of the Christian Church. In July of the same year he was in London, still hot and vehement, and Burleigh had to rescue him from Whitgift. Then for some months he was with his father in Rutlandshire. And now he drifted back to the English Church. In 1586 he was appointed Master of St. Olave's Grammar School, in Southwark. Bredwell charges him with continuing to propagate his revolutionary principles after he had promised conformity.* In 1589 he received a living in the county of Northampton, and there he remained till his death, in 1630.

Browne's relationship to Lord Burleigh and his ultimate apostasy saved him from the fate which came upon many who shared his opinions. In the summer of 1583 Elias Thacker and John Copping were hung at Bury for denying the Queen's ecclesiastical supremacy. Copping had been in prison for seven years, and Thacker for five.

* See Bredwell's *Rasing of the Foundations of Brownism* (1588), *passim*.

They were charged with having had a share in distributing the writings of Browne and Harrison. If they were guilty of this crime—and it does not appear that they denied it—their imprisonment could not have been very rigid, for the earliest writings of Browne and Harrison were not issued till long after their original committal. About the same time Dennis was hung at Thetford.

Three years later we catch another glimpse of secret services in London. Towards the close of 1586, John Greenwood, a Cambridge man in deacon's orders, while holding a service at a private house, was arrested and committed to the Clink. His imprisonment led to the discovery and arrest of a still more formidable separatist. On Sunday, November 19, between nine and ten o'clock in the morning, his friend, Henry Barrowe, went to see him in prison. The gaoler seized him without any legal warrant, and on the mere verbal authority of the archbishop. He was taken up the river to Lambeth that same afternoon, brought before the archbishop, and committed to the Gatehouse. Next to Robert Browne, Barrowe was the most famous of the early Congregation-
alists. He belonged to an old Norfolk family, was educated at Cambridge, and became a member of Gray's Inn. Lord Bacon says of him that

"Being a gentleman of a good house, but one that lived in London at ordinaries, and there learned to argue in table-talk, and so was very much known in the city and abroad, [he] made a leap from a vain and dissolute youth to a preciseness in the highest degree, the strangeness of which alteration made him very much spoken of." *

Governor Bradford, of New Plymouth, tells the story of Barrowe's conversion. He was walking in London one Lord's Day with one of his companions, and

* *Observations on a Libel* (1592). Bacon's Works [Spedding's Edition], viii. 166.

“ Heard a preacher at his sermon very loud, as they passed by the church. Upon which Mr. Barrowe said unto his consort, ‘ Let us go in and hear what this man saith that is thus earnest.’ ‘ Tush ! ’ saith the other ; ‘ what ! shall we go to hear a man talk ? ’ But in he went and sat down. And the minister was vehement in reproving sin, and sharply applied the judgments of God against the same.”

Barrowe was touched to the quick, and from that time lived a new life, gave himself to the study of the Scriptures, and soon his old companions heard that Barrowe had turned Puritan.

He and Greenwood remained in prison about seven years. At times they were under the severest restraint ; at other times, by the connivance of the gaoler, they appear to have had a considerable measure of liberty. They were examined over and over again by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. Cartwright and other moderate Puritans were sent to confer with them on their heresies. But they remained stubborn. Nor did they suspend their attacks on the bishops, the clergy, the moderate Puritans, and the organization and services of the English Church. During their imprisonment they issued a succession of vehement pamphlets. Barrowe’s *Discovery of the False Church* is indeed something more than a pamphlet ; it is a small quarto of 263 pages, closely printed, and it was written when his confinement was most rigid. Sheet after sheet of manuscript was, somehow, passed into the hands of his friends and sent off to the printers, Barrowe retaining no copy of what he had already written, and of course seeing no proofs.

His writings are often extremely amusing, though they are often, I am bound to admit, extremely dull. They are still more often extremely rough and violent. The quality of his invective recalls too frequently the coarse abuse of the clergy and the bishops in the Mar-Prelate tracts ; and there is strong internal evidence that some of these terrible

tracts came from his hand,* though his authorship of them does not seem to have been suspected. But his logic has, at times, a keen edge, and his humour is often extremely entertaining; and when he is at his best his style is vivacious and even brilliant.

The relations between Barrowe and his friends and those who still acknowledged Browne as their leader are extremely obscure and perplexing. Greenwood replying to Giffard, who had identified him with the Brownists, says :

“What opinion the Brownists hold of the Church of England, their worship, people, ministry, government, we neither know nor regard; neither is there any cause why we should be charged or condemned for their errors and faults, for which, themselves, and this Church of England that receiveth and nourisheth all sectaries, heretics, wicked and abominable persons whatsoever, shall account.” †

There is one sentence of Greenwood's which suggests a possible explanation of the division which certainly existed between Browne's followers and the followers of Barrowe. In the course of a vehement protest against what he calls the “lies, slanders, and railings” of Giffard, and especially against the charge that he and Barrowe were Brownists, he says, “Browne is a member of *your* church; your brother; and all Brownists do frequent *your* assemblies.” ‡

This was printed in 1591, five years after Browne had conformed on becoming Master of the Grammar School in Southwark, and two years after he had received the living in Northamptonshire. That Browne was now a member of the Church of England was notorious; but what could Greenwood mean by saying “all Brownists do frequent your assemblies”? Is it possible that the Brownists, like

* See Dr. Dexter's *Congregationalism of the last Three Hundred Years*, pp. 196–202.

† Quoted in Hanbury's *Historical Memorials*, vol. i. p. 66.

‡ Ibid. p. 69.

the early Methodists, may from the first have attended the parish churches while maintaining their own separate societies, and that Barrowe insisted on a more rigid separation? This seems hardly credible. Perhaps Browne's own conformity led his followers to adopt, at least for a time, a policy of compromise. We know, from a book against Brownism, published in 1588 by Samuel Bredwell, that Browne, now Master of the Southwark Grammar School, was complaining bitterly of the manner in which Barrowe and his friends denounced the English clergy and the English Church. Browne maintained that it was lawful for those who held Brownist opinions to go to church and to listen to the sermons of the godly clergy. Bredwell observes, naturally enough, that Browne's condemnation of what he regarded as Barrowe's fanatical violence was admirable, but that Barrowe hardly deserved to be rebuked by him. What makes this attack of Browne's on Barrowe more remarkable is the charge, which Bredwell evidently makes in good faith, that Browne had never explicitly renounced his old principles and not only believed them still, but was secretly propagating them.

I have never been able, however, to satisfy myself as to the grounds on which the Congregationalists of the later years of Elizabeth's reign so bitterly resented identification with the Brownists. The subject is extremely confused and obscure, and is not likely to receive elucidation unless some of the lost literature of those times happens to be discovered.*

But to return to the history of Barrowe. He and Greenwood were brought to trial at last, and the evidence against

* Some of Browne's writings on the controversy between him and Barrowe were circulated in manuscript. If any of these unprinted pamphlets survive, they would probably be extremely interesting and instructive.

them was drawn from the books they had issued during their long imprisonment. They had written very severe things about the Book of Common Prayer, and this was regarded by the judges as the same thing as libelling the Queen. They were hung at Tyburn in April, 1593.

A few weeks later John Penry was hung at St. Thomas-a-Watering, the place of execution for the county of Surrey. He had been a member of a Congregational Church for only a few months, and was condemned to death for sentences alleged to be treasonable found in his private papers.

These were not the only victims of ecclesiastical oppression. In the preface to a pamphlet in the Archbishop's Library at Lambeth, the writer says that, through the "barbarous cruelty" of the ecclesiastical authorities, "twenty-four souls have perished in their prisons within the city of London only, besides other places in the land;" and the names—there are women among them as well as men—are given in the margin.* It was a common practice to fling people into prison who were caught at a private service, and to leave them there for months and even for years untried; and many of them perished—obscure, forgotten martyrs—who by their heroism and sufferings laid the strong foundations of English liberty.

And now it seemed as if the work of persecution was about to achieve its end. In the Parliament of 1593 an Act was passed, banishing all separatists from the country, and menacing with heavy penalties all who gave them shelter. Penry, in a letter, written just before his death, to the church of which he was a member, had advised all who could to leave the country; and a considerable number left for Holland that summer. Four years later, Johnson,

* *A True Confession of the Faith and humble acknowledgment of the Allegiance which we, her Majesty's Subjects, falsely called Brownists, do hold towards God and yield to her Majesty, &c.* (1596.)

their pastor, and a still larger number of private members followed them. They settled in Amsterdam, where they had a church of about three hundred members admirably organized; Francis Johnson was pastor, and Henry Ainsworth teacher. Between 1606 and 1608 this powerful church was still further strengthened by the accession of John Robinson, William Brewster, William Bradford, and John Smyth, and the other emigrants from Scrooby and Gainsborough. But the Church had passed through violent troubles, and other troubles seemed coming. John Robinson and his friends, who wished to live in peace, removed to Leyden; and it was from the Leyden Church that Henry Jacob came to London in 1616, and that the Pilgrim Fathers went to America in 1620.

In London there still remained a remnant of the church which had once had Francis Johnson, now in Amsterdam, for its pastor, and John Greenwood, the martyr, for its teacher;* but its history since the loss of its leaders appears to have been one of extreme weakness, and Jacob determined to make a fresh beginning. The church he founded in Southwark still survives. It is the oldest Congregational church in England.

Jacob remained pastor of this church for about eight years, and then, according to Neal,† removed to Virginia. He was succeeded by Lathrop, who, after some years, followed his predecessor to America with about thirty of his congregation.

The fidelity of the Southwark church was tried by persecution. Throughout the reign of James I., and till the outbreak of the civil war, it could never meet without danger. In 1632 about sixty of its members were hold-

* He was appointed teacher in 1592. At this time he was allowed to be out of prison on bail.

† *History of the Puritans*, ii. 93.

ing a service at a private house in Blackfriars, and were discovered by the bishop's officers. Some escaped, but forty-two were caught, their pastor, Lathrop, among them. They were committed to prison and kept there for two years.

Separatism was crushed, but not yet destroyed. There were separatists at Yarmouth and Norwich who held secret services, and there were separatists in the neighbourhood of Ashford, in Kent. In a sermon preached before James I., in 1624, Bishop Hall is greatly troubled by the dangers which threaten the English Church, and exclaims, "Surely if we grow into that anarchical fashion of Independent congregations, which I see and lament to see, affected by too many, not without woeful success, we are gone; we are lost in a most miserable confusion." Where these Independent congregations were gathered, how they were organized, we do not know. I very much doubt whether they were regularly constituted Congregational churches, with recognized members, elders, and ministers.* Most of them were probably informal religious meetings held occasionally by religious persons who were dissatisfied with the services of the parish church. But the bishop was right in regarding them with apprehension. In 1631, writing to Laud, Bishop Hall informs him that there are eleven congregations of separatists about the city, "furnished with their idly-pretended pastors, who meet together in brew-houses and such other places of resort every Sunday.† From this it would appear that the congregations were regularly organized. A few years later he laments that there are no less than eighty separatist congregations of several sectaries in London and the immediate neighbourhood.‡

* Hanbury's *Historical Memorials*, i. 466.

† Waddington's *Congregational History*, i. 272.

‡ Ibid. i. 376.

It is, however, extremely difficult to determine to what extent Congregational principles were received in England before the outbreak of the civil war. If we could receive without reserve a statement made by Sir Walter Raleigh in the House of Commons in the debates on the Bill for banishing all separatists from the country, we should have the impression that Browne and Barrowe had achieved an immense success. Sir Walter told the House that there were 20,000 Brownists belonging to secret religious societies in London and the eastern counties, and he wanted to know how so large a number of persons, with their families, could be sent out of the kingdom; and if the men alone were driven out, who was to support their wives and children? But it does not appear on what grounds this estimate rested, and there is nothing to corroborate it. Lord Bacon, a very few months before, had given a very different account of the condition of the separatists. He said, "As for those which we call Brownists, being when they were at the most a very small number of very silly and base people, here and there in corners dispersed, they are now (thanks be to God), by the good remedies that have been used, suppressed and worn out, so as there is scarce any news of them."* Lord Bacon's account seems the more trustworthy.

The strength of the Congregationalists in this country was still further diminished during the next twenty years. Browne had already returned to the English Church. Barrowe and Greenwood, as we have seen, were executed in 1593. A few years later Johnson and the greater part of his church emigrated to Holland. The churches at Scrooby and Gainsborough followed them between 1606 and 1608.

The scattered separatists who remained in England

* *Observations on a Libel.* (1592.) Works, viii.

were left without leaders ; and, although there are clear indications that many of them continued to hold their secret meetings for worship, their strength seemed to be crushed. But the whole aspect of their affairs was changed when the Parliament finally broke with the King. Then they recovered leaders of conspicuous learning, courage, and intellectual vigour. Dr. Thomas Goodwin, Philip Nye, Jeremiah Burroughs, William Bridge, and Sidrach Simpson had been driven over to Holland by the persecution of Laud. When they left England they were moderate Puritans, and might have been satisfied with some slight relaxation in the terms of conformity. They returned to be the champions of Independency in the Westminster Assembly.

It is doubtful, however, whether, even when the civil war began, the numerical strength of the Independents who were actually members of Independent churches was at all considerable. Baillie, the Scotch commissioner, writing in 1645, says :

“Of all the bye-paths wherein the wanderers of our time are pleased to walk, this is the most considerable, not for the number but for the quality of the erring persons therein. There be few of the noted sects which are not a great deal more numerous ; but this way, what it wants in number, supplies by the weight of its followers. After five years' endeavours and great industry within the lines of the city's communication, they are said as yet to consist of much within one thousand persons ; men, women, and all who to this day have put themselves in any known congregation of that way being reckoned.*

Baillie's testimony reminds us that when the Westminster Assembly was holding its sessions Congregationalism had found its way into a new social rank. What Lord Bacon said of them in Elizabeth's time is confirmed by contemporary documents. A considerable proportion

* Baillie's *Dissuasive*, quoted in Price's *History of Nonconformity*, ii. 260.

of the members of the early Brownist churches were mechanics and working people; they were joiners, shipwrights, and serving men. Their leaders, indeed, were drawn from another class. Browne and Barrowe, as we have seen, were educated at Cambridge; they were not great scholars, but they were men of very unusual intellectual activity and force. Greenwood was also a Cambridge man. Francis Johnson was a fellow of Christ's in the same University, and was a man of considerable learning. Penry had studied both at Oxford and Cambridge. Henry Ainsworth was a profound Hebraist, and was described as "the great rabbi of this age." William Brewster, the elder of the Scrooby church, was a Cambridge man, and before he became postmaster at Scrooby had been private secretary to Davison, one of Elizabeth's most distinguished statesmen. Robinson, the pastor at Scrooby, was a fellow of Christ's College, Cambridge, and was remarkable for his intellectual vigour and extensive theological learning. John Smyth, the pastor of the Gainsborough church, was, like Robinson and Johnson, a fellow of Christ's. Henry Jacob, who returned to England from Leyden in James's time, and founded the church in Southwark, was an Oxford man, and belonged to St. Mary's Hall. Some of the early Congregationalists were in the habit of speaking very bitterly and scornfully of the national universities, but they owed more to the universities than they were disposed to acknowledge—perhaps more than they knew. The people were uneducated, but their ministers were men of cultivation, and some of them were men of very solid learning.

But before the meeting of the Westminster Assembly a great change had taken place in the intellectual and social rank of those who held the principles of Congregationalism, though many of them had not as yet associated themselves with Congregational churches. There is reason to

believe that the controversial writings of the exiles in Holland exerted a considerable influence on devout and cultivated men in England. The writings of John Robinson and of Henry Ainsworth were less vehement, less reckless, and, in a word, less volcanic than the Congregational literature of the previous generation; they were less likely to provoke resentment and indignation—more likely to create sympathy and produce conviction.

A still more powerful impression was probably created by the growing strength of Congregationalism in Massachusetts. When the founders of that great colony left England they thought that they were loyal members of the Church, and although they were unable to submit to some of the terms of conformity, they regarded separatism with horror. When they landed in America they organized their churches on Congregational principles. The success of the colony attracted to it the attention of many patriotic men who resented the civil tyranny of Charles and Wentworth, and the ecclesiastical tyranny of Laud. Sir Harry Vane left England for Massachusetts in 1625, but returned in time to become a member of the Long Parliament. Both Lord Brooke and Lord Viscount Saye and Sele purchased land in the colony, and were deeply interested in its fortunes. All these distinguished men avowed their sympathy with the Congregational theory. Other men of similar authority in Parliament and in the country were drawn to the same side; and by their social rank and political power they gave to the ministerial leaders of the Congregationalists an influence in the kingdom during the conflict with Charles out of all proportion to the actual number of their followers.

The traces of organized Congregationalism during the reign of James, and as late as the outbreak of the civil war, are faint and uncertain; but it is extremely probable that when the Long Parliament met, large numbers of

Englishmen held Congregational principles who were not members of any Congregational church; otherwise it would be hard to understand how it happened that within a few years the Congregationalists—who by this time were usually called Independents—became the strength of Cromwell's army, and were able to grasp supreme power in the State. But that inquiry lies beyond the limits of my subject this evening.

II.

In their *Theology* all the early Independents were loyal disciples of John Calvin. The tradition was unbroken for more than sixty years. The definitions in Robert Browne's principal treatise, published in 1582, are rigidly Calvinistic. John Robinson in 1624 defended the theology of the Synod of Dort. It was not till the troubles of the civil war began that any conspicuous Independents departed from the strict lines of Calvinism. The earliest and most famous of the innovators was John Goodwin, the author of *Redemption Redeemed*.*

But in Elizabeth's time it was not only the Congregational separatists who stood by the theology of Geneva. All Protestant England was practically of one mind. Cartwright and the moderate Puritans were Calvinists in doctrine as well as in polity. Whitgift, who persecuted both moderate Puritans and separatists with impartial severity, tried to impose on the clergy a set of doctrinal articles more rigidly Calvinistic than the authorized articles of the English Church.

Like the Presbyterian Puritans, the separatists held what many modern Congregationalists would regard as rather "high" theories of the two *Sacraments*. They

* See note at the end of this Lecture.

stood by Calvin—not by Zwingle. It is especially remarkable that, though Henry Barrowe, who is one of the ablest representatives of Elizabethan Congregationalism attacked nearly every part of the Book of Common Prayer, and fiercely denounced the obligation imposed on the clergy to baptize the children of irreligious persons, he made no complaint of the strong language in which the Baptismal Service gives thanks for the regeneration of baptized infants. Nor do I remember any protest in the writings of any other of the early Independents against this most pernicious error.* That protest did not arise till a much later period in our history. The early Independents were vehement in their complaint that the English clergy were compelled to baptize children who were not “in the covenant,” because neither parent was godly; but if the right children were baptized they do not seem to have thought that the English service attributed too much to the sacrament. They were willing to recognize a relation of some kind—conditional and remote, if not absolute and immediate—between baptism and regeneration.

There was a third point in which the separatists agreed with the Presbyterian Puritans. They regarded *Romanism* with intense hatred. In the settlement of the National Church, Elizabeth had endeavoured to soften to her Catholic subjects the shock of the great religious revolution by preserving all that she dared to preserve of the Romish polity, ritual, and service. There was no apparent breach in the continuity of the hierarchy. The ancient titles were preserved. Archbishops and bishops, deans and chapters, priests and deacons, still had charge, under the Queen’s supreme authority, of the religious

* Nicholas Crane complained of the confidence with which the English Church declared that all baptized infants were regenerated, but Nicholas Crane was a Presbyterian Puritan.

faith and worship of the nation. They wore Romish vestments. The materials of the Book of Common Prayer were largely drawn from the ancient Romish service books. The communicants at the Lord's Supper received the sacred symbols kneeling at the rails of the altar. The ring was still used in Marriage, and the sign of the cross in Baptism. For some years the policy of the Queen was successful. The Romanists continued to worship in the parish churches. Then there came a brief period of struggle, struggle provoked chiefly by foreign influence ; but at last the Queen's policy, aided by fortunate political events, achieved its purpose. When she came to the throne the earnest Catholics were at least as numerous as the earnest Protestants ; but long before the end of her reign the Catholics had greatly declined both in their numbers and their zeal, and most of them had been drawn into the National Church. The Queen's compromising policy saved the kingdom from the horrors of a religious civil war.

But to all the Puritans this policy was hateful. They were not priests, and they passionately resented the determination of the Queen to compel them to wear the vestments which led the people to regard them as priests. Ceremonies which are now harmless were then associated with superstitions inherited from the dark Romish times, and to perform these ceremonies for the sake of retaining in the Church those to whom the ceremonies had a superstitious value seemed even to the moderate Puritans a grave offence against Christ.

The separatists regarded with a still fiercer spirit the survivals of Romanism in the National Church. They believed that the wrath of God menaced the country while any trace or tradition of Rome remained. The lengths to which they carried their hostility are startling to us in these days. It was not enough to pull down the crucifixes

in the churches, to break in pieces the images of saints and angels, to destroy the painted windows ; it was not enough to shatter the fonts, to burn the copes, the surplices, the altar cloths, and the organs ; the churches themselves—the very walls, roof, and foundations—had been polluted by the idols and false worship of Romish times and provoked the Divine abhorrence.

They argued that godly Jewish kings, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, Josiah, destroyed all the high places, altars, groves, which were erected in Israel contrary to the law of God ; and they maintained that the Scriptures show evidently that “ God hath such idol places and all their furniture in such detestation, that He hath commanded the magistrates utterly to raze and deface them.” To reserve the buildings, the costly marbles, the silver, and the gold for a purer worship was to repeat the sin of Saul, who, when he had been commanded to destroy Agag and all his flocks and herds, retained the best of the spoil and kept alive the sheep and oxen to sacrifice to the Lord at Gilgal.

“ God ” (says Barrowe) “ will not be worshipped with them ; and therefore they, in reserving them, not only condemn God of injustice and folly (that belike considered not that these things might be sanctifiedly used to His worship), but thrust upon God such abominations as He detesteth, and with them they will worship Him whether He will or no. But they will one day know that obedience is better than sacrifice.”

To understand this fiery hatred of Rome, and of whatever Rome had touched, we must remember the gross ignorance, superstition, and immorality which remained in the country after Rome had been supreme for a thousand years, and the foul vices of which the Romish clergy had been really guilty, and which, no doubt, popular opinion unjustly and recklessly exaggerated. We must also remember the cruel persecutions of the preceding reign. Among the separatists who were living when Barrowe wrote these words there were many who could remember

the fires in which the Protestants were burnt at Smithfield, at Gloucester, and at Oxford. The fathers and mothers, the elder brothers and sisters of some of them may have died in prison or been burnt at the stake for denying the doctrine of Transubstantiation. The massacre of St. Bartholomew and the cruelties of Alva, in the Netherlands, were still more recent. The peril was not yet over. The Romish Church was still a terror to all Protestant Europe. To the separatists it was in no sense a Church, but a dark conspiracy against the just authority of princes, against the liberties of nations, and against the souls of men. Its breath was poison, and as it passed by, its very shadow—reversing the miracle of the apostle it claimed as its founder—struck men with blindness, paralysis, and death. They thought it their duty to hate Romanism as Christian men should hate sin, and to hate the Pope as Christian men should hate the devil. And this part of their duty—their enemies being judges—they most faithfully discharged.

Dr. Dexter thinks that “Robert Browne is entitled to the proud pre-eminence of having been the first writer clearly to state and defend in the English tongue the true—and now accepted—doctrine of the relation of the magistrate to the Church.” * This, with some grave qualifications may perhaps be claimed for the founder of English Congregationalism. † But on a later page Dr.

* *History of Congregationalism*, p. 101.

† One very grave qualification is suggested by the following sentence from *Reformation without Tarrying for Any*. Browne says that the Queen, by virtue of her civil authority, “may put to death all that deserve it by law, *either of the Church or Commonwealth*, and none may resist her, or the magistrate under her, by force or wicked speeches when they execute the laws. It is possible, perhaps, to interpret these words as asserting nothing more than the doctrine of non-resistance which was commonly maintained by the separatists; if unjust ecclesiastical laws condemned Browne to death for separatism, he must not resist when the Queen sent him to Tyburn; but I very much doubt whether this was Browne’s meaning in this place.

Dexter identifies Browne's doctrine of "the relation of the magistrate to the Church" with "the true modern doctrine of toleration and of liberty of conscience." * No doubt he wrote some noble words which look that way. He says, for instance, that "it is the conscience and not the power of man that will drive us to seek the Lord's kingdom." † But I have seen nothing in Browne on the limitations of the magistrate's power which may not be paralleled by quotations from other writers of that age who notoriously attributed to the magistrate an authority which we should regard as flagrantly inconsistent with the most elementary principles of religious liberty.

Let him be tried by a very simple test. Is it credible that either he or any of his followers in Elizabeth's time would have conceded freedom of worship to Roman Catholics? Would they have consented to tolerate the open celebration of the mass? Would they have consented to tolerate its celebration in private houses? They protested with vehemence against the suppression of their own faith; they claimed, and rightly claimed, the right to worship God according to their own interpretation of God's will; is there a single line in any of their writings claiming the same liberty for popish recusants or protesting against the laws which made the popish service a crime?

But it may be alleged that the early Independents may have been right in their principles and yet deficient in the clear intelligence and firm faith necessary to apply them; just as there are some men in our own days who have grasped the true theory of religious equality but are very much at fault when they have to act upon it in extreme cases. In Elizabeth's time the case of the Romanists was surrounded with exceptional difficulties and complications.

* *History of Congregationalism*, p. 103.

† *Reformation without Tarrying for Any*.

With Jesuit priests creeping secretly from one country house to another in Norfolk and Lancashire, and inciting the Catholic gentry to revolt ; with the troops of Alva, in the Netherlands, threatening England with invasion ; with the Spanish Armada in the Channel ; even an advanced member of the Liberation Society might not have had the courage to insist on granting the Catholics perfect religious equality. Well, take another case. Barrowe wrote as strongly as Browne against any interference of the civil magistrate in the affairs of the Church ; but in the preface to a volume issued by Greenwood and himself while they were in prison they say :

“ We acknowledge that the prince ought to compel all their subjects to the hearing of God’s Word in the public exercises of the Church. Yet cannot the prince compel any to be a member of the Church, or the Church to receive any without assurance by public profession of their own faith ; or to retain any longer than they continue and walk orderly in the faith.” *

To compel men to the hearing of God’s Word is very far from being in harmony with “ the true modern doctrine of toleration and of liberty of conscience.”

A few years later—in 1596—the exiled Church in Amsterdam, and their brethren who remained in London, published a confession of their faith. In this confession they declare—

“ That it is the office and duty of princes and magistrates, who by the ordinances of God are supreme governors under Him over all persons and causes within their realms and dominions, to suppress and root out all false ministries, voluntary religions, and counterfeit worship of God ; to abolish and destroy the idol temples, and all images, altars, vestments, and all other monuments of idolatry and superstition ; and to take and convert to their own civil uses, not only the benefit of all such idolatrous buildings and monuments, but also the Revenues, Demesnes, Lordships, Possessions, Glebes, and maintenance of any false ministries and unlawful ecclesiastical functions whatsoever within their

* Hanbury’s *Historical Memorials*, p. 52.

dominion. And, on the other hand, to establish and maintain by their laws every part of God's Word, His pure religion and true ministry ; to cherish and protect all such as are careful to worship God according to His Word, and to lead a good life in all peace and loyalty ; yea, to enforce all their subjects, whether ecclesiastical or civil, to do their duties to God and men ; protecting and maintaining the good, punishing and restraining the evil, according as God hath commanded, whose lieutenants they are here on earth." *

Dr. Dexter says that the authors of this confession were "far behind Browne" in their theory of the relation between the magistrate and the Church. Perhaps they were. And yet they would have accepted without qualification the strongest words that Browne ever wrote against the interference of the magistrate with the faith, the worship, or the discipline of the Church.

Dr. Dexter's knowledge of the history and literature of Congregationalism is so profound that it is presumptuous for me to differ from him ; and it is probably true that Browne saw more clearly than most of his immediate successors that the magistrate discharges his proper function in maintaining civil justice ; though I feel tolerably confident that even Browne would have insisted that it was the duty of the magistrate to follow the good example of pious Jewish kings, and to suppress Romish idolatry and whatever remnants of Romish idolatry had been preserved in the English Church. But if we are to master the true historical development of the principles of religious liberty we must always remember that when the early Independents insisted that the civil magistrate had no authority to legislate for the Church, or to appoint its officers, or to regulate its services, or to administer its discipline, their single purpose was to assert the august supremacy of Christ. They were not repelling the encroachments of the civil power on mere human rights ; they were defend-

* *A True Confession of the Faith*, Article 39.

ing what they believed to be the frontiers of the Divine kingdom against the invasion of an inferior authority.

It was this which gave dignity and grandeur to their struggle with the hierarchy and the crown. The theory which towards the close of Elizabeth's reign was maintained with stately eloquence in the *Ecclesiastical Polity* was anticipated by Whitgift, the greatest and most powerful opponent both of the Presbyterian Puritans and of the separatists. To Whitgift—as to Hooker, and Burke, and Arnold—the Church and the commonwealth were not separate though allied powers. They were one. He contended that the supreme magistrate of the commonwealth is necessarily the supreme governor of the Church. Unless the authority of the Queen was to be broken, unless she was to be deprived of half her sovereignty, it was impossible that she could permit a democratic polity to exist in the Church side by side with a monarchy in the State. The government of the Church must be conformed to the government of the commonwealth; and the supremacy of the Prince must be asserted in both. She was the fountain of ecclesiastical as well as of civil jurisdiction. She exerted her civil authority through the Lord Chancellor and the judges; and she exerted her ecclesiastical authority through the archbishops and bishops. She had the right to regulate both the worship and the discipline of the Church; and Whitgift contended that even in determining the gravest questions of doctrine the authority of Christian princes had been recognized in the best times of the Christian Church.

Against these claims, which were the very basis of the whole polity and administration of the English Church, the Elizabethan Congregationalists protested strenuously, with passionate indignation and fiery scorn. They asserted under more tragic conditions the great principle which

inspired the most heroic ecclesiastical movement of our own times. Their contention was the contention of Chalmers and Guthrie, and Candlish and Buchannan, and the five hundred men who founded the Free Church of Scotland. They suffered for "the Crown Rights of the Redeemer." It was for these that Copping and Thacker were hung at Bury. The civil supremacy of the Queen they acknowledged. But acknowledge her ecclesiastical supremacy? No they can go to the gallows, but they cannot be traitors to Christ, the only King and Legislator of the Church. This was the temper of the obscure and forgotten martyrs who died in the Clink and the Gatehouse. This was the temper which sustained Barrowe and Greenwood through their long imprisonment and gave them courage to lay down their lives at Tyburn. A word would have saved them, as a pinch of incense would have saved from the sword and the lions the saints and martyrs of an earlier age. But disloyalty to Christ was more terrible than death, and they died rather than deny Him. The same temper lived on in Francis Johnson, in Henry Ainsworth, in Brewster, in Bradford, in Robinson, in Clyfton, in Smyth, and made them endure their exile in Holland, if not with content, yet with fortitude invincible. It inspired the adventurous company that crossed the Atlantic and made their home on the bleak and cheerless shores of an unknown continent. The Pilgrim Fathers have reaped their reward. Again the great words have come true, "He that loseth his life shall save it." They thought nothing of the rights of men, but they were willing to suffer all things to assert the rights of God; and by their perfect fidelity to God they laid the foundations of that great commonwealth, that mighty confederation of kindred States, stretching from the eastern to the western ocean, and from the great lakes to the Gulf of Mexico, in which the rights of men have been more frankly recognized and more firmly assured than in

the happiest kingdoms or republics of the old world, either in ancient or in modern times ; the refuge and the home of the oppressed of every land, the stately temple, the impregnable fortress of human freedom. And for us in England as for our brethren in America the modern theory and practice of religious freedom have their root in the loyalty of our ecclesiastical ancestors to the throne of Christ. They limited the authority of the civil magistrate, they resisted his tyranny, not by asserting the inalienable rights of the individual soul, but by asserting the awful sovereignty of God. "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you rather than unto God, judge ye."

This honour the separatists share with the Presbyterian Puritans. Cartwright was just as resolute as Browne or as Barrowe in refusing to concede the inordinate pretensions of Whitgift on behalf of the civil magistrate. It was the faith of both the Presbyterian Puritans and the separatists that, when the Queen claimed the right to regulate the polity, the worship, and the discipline of the Church, she was usurping the prerogatives of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Both the Presbyterian Puritans and the separatists insisted that the will of Christ on these great matters was to be learnt from the *Holy Scriptures*. In their methods of interpreting both the Old Testament and the New they were as unscientific as their Erastian and Episcopalian opponents. They quoted the books of Chronicles and the book of Nehemiah, the prophecies of Zechariah and the prophecies of Hosea, to settle controversies about the organization of the Christian Church and about Christian baptism. Presbyterians and separatists differed as to the precise form of the polity of the churches of Jerusalem, Antioch, Corinth, and Ephesus ; but they were agreed that the polity of the apostolic churches was intended to

be permanent. They insisted that the authority which the apostles had received from Christ covered all the directions which they gave for the settlement of church order, as well as their testimony to the doctrines of the Christian faith, and that later generations have no more right to depart from apostolic polity than from apostolic doctrine.

Most modern Congregationalists would decline to rest the argument for Congregationalism on precedents recorded in the Acts of the Apostles or on texts quoted from the Epistles. We prefer to find the laws of ecclesiastical polity in the laws of the spiritual life, in the objects for which Christian churches exist, in the central principles of the teaching of Christ. But the incessant appeal of the early separatists to the formal authority of the Scriptures was a noble, perhaps a necessary, error. The Christian consciousness was only just emerging from centuries of darkness and confusion. The shadows of the long night were not yet quite scattered. The Church had lost its way; it had been going wrong for more than a thousand years. The true paths were broken up; hardly a trace of them remained. Our fathers felt that it would be very easy for them to make grave mistakes unless they kept close to the definite commandments of Christ and His apostles. It is commonly said that extreme Protestants have exchanged the tyranny of an infallible Bible for the tyranny of an infallible church; it would be truer to say that, having discovered the errors and the crimes of a corrupt church, they turned to God Himself with exulting faith, with immeasurable hope, and with the consciousness of a new and glorious freedom. But how were they to know His will? They were certain that Jewish prophets and Christian apostles had been charged with a revelation from God to man, and that Christ was the brightness of God's glory and the express image of His person.

The permanent history of this supernatural revelation they found in the Scriptures of the Old Testament and the New. It was not a book that they obeyed, but God.

For a time they did not clearly understand the method of that revelation of the will of God which was recorded in the Scriptures. Some of our ecclesiastical ancestors believed that the criminal laws of the Jewish people had authority for all nations and for all time; that the punishments inflicted by the Mosaic legislation for moral offences were as permanent as the ethical precepts by which the offences themselves were forbidden. They committed a similar error in dealing with the church regulations contained in the New Testament. They supposed that these were as permanent as the spiritual laws and principles of which these regulations were the external expressions and guarantees.

They made another and a kindred mistake, and a very natural one. The history of Christendom—the actual condition of Christendom in their own times—illustrated the grossness of the superstitions and of the immoralities into which the Church might be betrayed if it escaped from the control and protection of the great and eternal revelation of God contained in the Scriptures. In returning from the traditions of the Church, from its current ethics and from its current theology, to the Bible, they had passed from darkness into the light of God. They inferred that no knowledge of God and the will of God was accessible except through the Scriptures. The time had not yet come for them to recognize the profound and noble truth illustrated by Richard Hooker—that there are other sources of knowledge concerning the will of God than those contained in the written record of supernatural revelations. If at times they recognized it they recognized it timidly. The fearless application of Hooker's principle requires a conscious maturity of intelligence and a sense

of security in relation to the great truths and laws of the Divine kingdom, which the early Independents had not attained. Perhaps their literalism was necessary to their safety. A generation or two later John Owen asserted the truth for which Hooker had contended, though even Owen applied it with inadequate freedom and courage.

But what may be regarded in our times as the slavish submission of the Elizabethan Congregationalists to the letter of Scripture did not prevent them from attributing to the *Church*, and to every member of the Church, prerogatives and powers of the most startling kind. This was the point at which they divided from the moderate Puritans. Cartwright and his friends maintained that the Christian commonalty should have a voice in the election of elders and pastors, but they vested the actual government of the Church in the Church officers;—the defence of the true faith and the administration of discipline belonged to the elected rulers of the Church. Browne and Barrowe and all the early Congregationalists made the most vehement assault on the Presbyterian position. They assaulted it—not because it withdrew from the Christian commonalty mere personal rights, but because it released them from duties with which they had been charged by Christ Himself.

“It is manifest” (says Henry Barrowe) “that all the members of the Church have a like interest in Christ, in His Word, in the Faith; that they all together make one Body unto Him; that all the affairs of the Church belong to that Body together. All the actions of the Church, as Prayers, Censures, Sacraments, Faith, &c., be the actions of them all jointly and of every one of them severally, although the Body unto divers actions use such members as it knoweth fit to the same. All the members are jointly bound unto edification, and unto all other helps or service they may do unto the whole. All are charged to watch, exhort, admonish, stir up, reprove, &c., and hereunto have the power of our Lord Jesus, the keys of the kingdom of heaven, even the Word of the Most High; thereby to bind their rulers in chains

and their nobles in fetters; thereby to cast down every stronghold and high thing that is exalted against God . . . to admonish the greatest, even Archippus, to look to his ministry. . . . For this we know that there is no Church can excuse us for the breach of God's law before that great Judge. Now then, seeing that every member hath interest in the public actions of the Church, and together shall bear blame for the defaults of the same, . . . who can deny but every particular member hath power, yea, and ought to examine the manner of administering the Sacraments, as also the estate, disorder, or transgressions of the whole Church; yea, and not to join in any known transgression with them, but rather call them all to repentance, &c., and if he find them obstinate and hardened in their sin, rather to leave their fellowship than to partake with them in wickedness." *

The ground on which these great responsibilities are imposed on the commonalty of the Church is the union between Christ and all Christians. All who are loyal to Christ abide in Christ, and Christ abides in them. They therefore share His regal power, His prophetic wisdom, and the sacredness of His priestly functions. He reigns through them; to resent their authority is to resent the authority of Christ. Through them He maintains His own truth; He teaches the Church and proclaims the gospel to the world through their lips; and through them condemns whatever falsehood is hostile to the faith once delivered to the saints. Their intercessions and prayers are His. Robert Browne states these truths in formal definitions :

"Every one of the Church is made a King, a Priest, and a Prophet under Christ, to uphold and further the kingdom of God, and to break and destroy the kingdom of Antichrist and Satan. . . . The kingdom of all Christians is their office of guiding and ruling with Christ, to subdue the wicked, and make one another obedient to Christ. Their Priesthood is their office of cleansing and redressing wickedness, whereby sin and uncleanness is taken away from amongst them. Their Prophecy is their office of judging all things by the Word of God, whereby they increase in knowledge and wisdom among themselves." †

* *Discovery of the False Church.*

† *A Book which sheweth the Life and Manner, &c.*

The lofty claims of the Church of Rome to be the visible representative of God, impose a less severe strain on the resources of faith than the claims of the Congregational polity as expounded by the Elizabethan Congregationalists. For the supreme ruler of the Romish Church—in whom its supernatural powers have their centre and home—is almost a legend even while he lives; he is never seen by the millions of the faithful. The seat of his authority is in a remote and ancient city, venerable with traditions of magnificence and greatness, extending over more than two thousand years. He inherits the titles and the dignities of a long succession of rulers of the Church, who were once the true sovereigns of great nations and received the homage of conquerors and kings. Costly treasures of learning, lovely and majestic creations of art, the most glorious achievements of genius, have contributed, through generation after generation, to surround his throne with splendour. The loyalty of innumerable saints, the devotion of martyrs, the courage and zeal of missionaries who have evangelized heathen nations, invest the history of Rome with a supernatural sanctity. And after all the reverses of many centuries she still retains in her communion races remote from each other in country, in language, in civilization; and her priests receive the confessions of penitents, and hold the cross before the eyes of the dying in every country under heaven.

That such a church—with memories so ancient, so heroic, so magnificent, so pathetic, so sacred, with powers still so immense over the intellectual and spiritual life of mankind, should claim to be the trustee and guardian of the truth of Christ, the earthly representative of His authority, and the channel of heavenly grace, is not wonderful. Nor is it wonderful that the claim should enforce submission.

But that sanctity and Divine prerogatives such as the

early Congregationalists attributed to Christian churches should be conceded to an obscure company consisting chiefly of carpenters, shoemakers, shipwrights, and serving men, in constant fear of being discovered by the officers of the law, meeting one week in a private house in a narrow lane in the city of London, the next in a disused gravel-pit in the neighbouring fields, and the next in the hold of a Dutch ship in the Thames; that such prerogatives should be conceded to Congregational churches, as known to ourselves, which in these happier times assemble without dread of violence to admit members, to elect their pastors and deacons, and to exercise discipline on those who have sinned; this requires an energy—some would say a fanaticism—of faith, to which it might be supposed that human nature would be rarely equal. It requires a vivid realization of the truth that “the exceeding greatness of God’s power” which “He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead, and made Him sit at His right hand in the heavenly places far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world but also in that which is to come,” “quickened us together with Christ, and raised us up with Him, and made us sit with Him in the heavenly places;” so that all who are in Christ share the life of Christ and His glory. Only this conception of the supernatural dignity which already belongs to all Christian people can make the theory of Congregationalism credible.

Of course the Congregationalists began by insisting that only those who are in union with Christ Himself have any title to union with the Church of Christ. It was the indiscriminate admission of all kinds of persons into the English Church which drove Robert Browne to separatism about 1576. It was this same evil which in 1590 provoked Henry Barrowe, in describing the vices of those who

were in the membership of the Church to use language almost too gross for quotation, but not too gross for the facts. It was this indiscriminate communion which in 1625 John Robinson declared to be "a sickness desperate of all remedy." "No man," he says, "to whom England is known can be ignorant of it."

"Seeing that all the natives there and subjects of the kingdom, although never such strangers from all show of true piety and goodness, and fraught never so full with many most heinous impieties and vices (of which rank, whether there be not an infinite and far greater number, I would to God it could with any reason be doubted), are, without difference, compelled and enforced by most severe laws, civil and ecclesiastical, into the body of that Church." *

Congregationalism was a serious attempt to recognize in the organization of the Church the infinite difference between those who are in Christ and those who are not, between the living and the dead, the saved and the lost. The great prerogatives which it attributed to the Church assumed that the Church consisted of persons who had received the life of Christ.

The independence of every separate community of the faithful was an immediate corollary from these prerogatives. "Where two or three are gathered together in Christ's name, there is Christ in the midst of them"—not standing apart, but one of the company; or rather, making them all one in Himself. Their prayers are His. Their acts are His. What they ask they receive. What things soever they bind on earth are bound in heaven; and what things soever they loose on earth are loosed in heaven.† From an assembly in which Christ is present there can be no appeal to synod, or bishop, or general council; and all interference from without must, in

* *A Just and Necessary Apology.* Works, vol. iii. p. 67.

† Matt. xviii. 15-20.

Christ's name and for the maintenance of His authority, be resisted.

It may sometimes happen, indeed, that a church is unable to discover clearly the mind of Christ. The "spirit of wisdom and revelation" which Paul prayed God to give to the Ephesian Church, is not given in equal measure to all individual Christians or to all societies of Christians. There are also matters which are of common interest to many churches, about which, therefore, all these churches should be consulted. In these cases a church or several churches may seek the assistance of a synod. According to Robert Browne, if I understand him aright, a synod is not a meeting of the ministers, elders, or elected representatives of separate churches, but of all the members of these churches. In his principal treatise* he describes synods as "meetings of sundry churches which act when the weaker churches seek help of the stronger for deciding or redressing of matters, or else the stronger look to them for redress;" and he says, "A synod is a joining or partaking of the authority of many churches met together in peace, for redress and deciding of matters which cannot well be otherwise taken up."

The synod recognized by Browne differed, therefore, in three important particulars from a Presbyterian synod :

(1) It was an assembly in which all the members of the associated churches might take part ; not an assembly of ministers and elders representing the churches.

(2) It was convened by the voluntary action of the associated churches, and there was no power to compel an appeal to a synodical decision.

(3) It met only as occasion arose, and was not a permanent authority.

* *A Book which sheweth the Life and Manners, &c.* Answer to Question 51. The second quotation is Definition 51.

Congregational churches situated in the same neighbourhood might perhaps act wisely in calling together now and then such a synod in our own times.

The attempt to give form and reality to such a church polity as that which I have described was attended by many obvious and menacing difficulties. To only two of these can I refer before bringing this lecture to a close.

The first difficulty originated in the intense consciousness which possessed the early Independents that the members of a church share a common Christian life. Early Independency was intolerant of individualism. Every member of an Independent church felt that the righteousness of his fellow-members gave strength to his own righteousness, and that their sin brought shame and weakness on himself. If they were fervent, the fires of his own devotion burnt more brightly; if they were cold and careless, his own ardour was in danger of being quenched. The story of Achan was always present to the minds of our earliest ecclesiastical ancestors. But the large and generous wisdom in judging of other men which is one of the mellow fruits of disciplined and cultivated saintliness was not likely to be common among these enthusiastic and vehement reformers. Every man was likely to impose his own moral ideas upon all his brethren, and to insist that if in any details of character and conduct they varied from the law which was approved by his own conscience, they were disloyal to Christ. The ethical sagacity of the essays written by John Robinson towards the close of his life at Leyden was far beyond the reach of inferior men, who had been forced into incessant conflict with the civil and ecclesiastical authorities, and who resented the hard usage which was the penalty of their fidelity to Christ.

Church discipline was, therefore, certain to be too inquisi-

torial. It was certain to interfere unnecessarily, unwisely, and sometimes most unjustly and most harshly, with individual freedom. It was certain to disregard those varieties of temperament, and those varieties of social traditions and customs, which vary the application of the unchanging ethical laws of Christ. The danger was enormously increased by the frequency with which meetings for discipline were held. The church of which Richard Fytz was minister in the early part of Elizabeth's reign met every Wednesday, "to use prayer and exercise discipline on them which do deserve it, by the strength and sure warrant of the Lord God's Word."* This custom seems to have been maintained. The results might have been anticipated. We know very little of the internal history of the secret churches which were formed in London; but there is reason to believe that the church of which Johnson was pastor was seriously disturbed by quarrels about discipline. The great church at Amsterdam was the scene of violent and shameful strife originating in the same cause.

There was another danger. The Congregational theory attributed such extraordinary powers and prerogatives to the individual members of the church, to the most ignorant, to those whose Christian life was most imperfect, as well as to the wisest, the most learned, and the most saintly, that outsiders naturally supposed that a Congregational church must be a disorderly mob, in which age and experience commanded no reverence, and the rulers exerted no authority. Not unnaturally, too, some of the members of Congregational churches interpreted the theory in a manner which permitted every man to claim for his own opinions the authority of inspiration, and to disregard the judgment of all his brethren. The account

* Waddington's *Congregational Martyrs*, p. 13.

which was sometimes given of the duties of individual Christian men, of their authority to rebuke the gravest and most venerable church officers, did really seem to authorize the wildest disorder.

But a theory cannot be rightly judged unless it is taken as a whole. It was, after all, to the Church—not to its individual members—that the Congregational theory ascribed such lofty prerogatives; and for an individual to resist the judgment and power of the Church was to incur an awful risk. There might be circumstances in which the resistance was necessary; but if he resisted the Church when the Church was acting under the control of the law of Christ, he was resisting Christ's own authority, and would suffer terrible penalties.

And all the principal leaders of Independency had very high views concerning the place and power of pastors and elders. It was not their theory that the authority of church officers is derived from the people who elect them. They believed that the Church merely determines what persons shall rule; the power of rulers is derived from God. Browne describes "church governours" as "persons receiving their authority and office of God, for the guiding of His people the Church, received and called thereto by due consent and agreement of the Church;" * and he insists with great seriousness on the duty of giving to rulers due obedience. Henry Barrowe also maintains that though there is communion in the Church there is no equality. The various members of the body of Christ have a common interest in Him, but their functions differ. He says in his vigorous, homely way that "the Eye guides the Hand, showing it how it ought to work; and that the Hand washes and wipes and does all loving help to the Eye." † The least member in the Church has the same

* *Life and Manners, &c.*, Def. 117.

† *Discovery of the False Church.*

freedom in Christ as the greatest, but not the same gifts or functions.

The early Independents believed that every member of a church might be charged with responsibility for every church action, and might have an unrestricted right of criticism, without lessening the just authority of the church officers. No doubt this is possible; but it implies the possession, both by church officers and private church members, of great and noble qualities of judgment and temper. Human nature, even when under the power of the Spirit of Christ, does not touch ideal perfection, and sometimes, even in those days, churches were rent with violent strife. In Amsterdam, Francis Johnson attempted to lessen the danger by absorbing in the eldership a large part of the power of the Church. He aimed at what has been called an "intra-Congregational Presbyterianism." * Dr. Dexter believes that Barrowe attributed a greater power than Browne to the elders of the Church; that, while both insisted on the absolute autonomy of each church, Barrowe approached Presbyterianism by claiming for the elders a kind of authority which was inconsistent with the more democratic principles of Browne and his followers. I hesitate to contest Dr. Dexter's conclusions on a question of this kind. But after reading all the writings of Browne, which are known to be in existence, I must confess that I am unable to see that his principles are at all more democratic than those which are asserted by Barrowe in his *Discovery of the False Church*. Neither in Browne nor in Barrowe is there any attempt to define the limits of the authority of church rulers; but in both there is a clear recognition of the duty and necessity

* I owe this phrase to Mr. Fletcher, who, in his *History of Independency*, attributes "intra-Congregational Presbyterianism" to Browne. I believe that there is just as little reason for attributing it to Browne as for attributing it to Barrowe.

of acknowledging this authority. Indeed, on this point Browne seems to me stronger than Barrowe. He makes it quite plain that in his judgment, rulers, whether ecclesiastical or political, should really rule, and that those who are under their authority should submit and obey.

It is true, no doubt, that in Amsterdam, several years after Barrowe's death, some of his friends attempted to assert the power of the elders in a manner which partially suppressed the rights of the commonalty of the Church; and as I have had no opportunity of making myself acquainted with the literature which sprang out of that unhappy controversy, it is possible that they may have appealed to Barrowe's authority. If they did, the appeal could certainly have been met and destroyed by passages from Barrowe's *Discovery of the False Church*.

The position which Johnson assumed at Amsterdam was the result, partly of what seemed the disorders necessarily incident to the freer form of polity, partly of the influence of Presbyterianism. Robinson, at Leyden, returned, as I think, to very much the same conception of the relations between the elders and the people as that which had been held by Browne and Barrowe, though perhaps he added a little emphasis to the authority of the elders. He says:

"We believe that the external church government under Christ, the only Mediator and Monarch thereof, is plainly aristocratical, and to be administered by some certain choice men, although the State, which many unskilfully confound with the government, be after a sort popular and democratical. By this it appertains to the people freely to vote in elections and judgments of the Church.* In

* Robinson protests against those whom "it hath pleased . . . contumeliously to upbraid us," and who charged the Independents with allowing women and children to vote. "Only men, and them grown," Robinson acknowledged as having a right to the franchise. He definitely asserts the right and the duty of the elders to meet at times apart from the body of the Church to consider questions affecting its interests, and to prepare the business.

respect of the other, we make account it behoves the elders to govern the people, even in their voting, in just liberty, given by Christ whatsoever. (1 Cor. xii. 28; 1 Tim. v. 17; Heb. xiii. 17.) Let the elders publicly propound and order all things in the Church, and so give their sentence on them; let them reprove them that sin, convince the gainsayers, comfort the repentant, and so administer all things according to the prescript of God's Word: let the people of faith give their assent to their elders' holy and lawful administration; that so the ecclesiastical elections and censures may be ratified and put into solemn execution by the elders, either in the ordination of officers after election, or excommunication of offenders after obstinacy in sin."*

But the strength of this declaration is greatly qualified by another passage in the same treatise, in which he appears to deny to the "highest church officers and governours" any real official authority. Contrasting the position of the civil magistrate with the position of church rulers, he says that in many things the bare authority of the magistrate requires submission; in nothing does the bare authority of church rulers require submission. There are many cases in which, with reason or without reason, the civil magistrate can demand obedience; there are no cases in which church rulers can assert a similar authority. To quote his own words—

"Neither are the ministers in anything at all, as are the magistrates, in many things, to be obeyed for the authority of the commander, but for the reason of the commandment, which the ministers are also bound in duty to manifest and approve unto the consciences of them over whom they are set."†

This limits the power of church rulers to the right to persuade; and this right, according to the Congregational theory, belongs to every private member of the Church.

But to define the limits of authority on the one hand and of submission on the other, and yet to preserve the Congregational ideal, is impossible. The just relations

* Works, iii. 43.

† Works, iii. 61.

between the rulers of the Church and the people can be preserved only by the intimate and perfect union of both people and rulers with Christ. The relations are too delicate, too subtle, too variable, to be fixed by a rigid rule ; they must be determined by the immediate action of a Living Spirit and a Personal Will. The whole life of the Church belongs to a region in which external law can have no effective place. With a wise and unfailing loyalty to Christ penetrating the whole Church, no difficulty will emerge that will not soon admit of a satisfactory solution ; without this loyalty no regulations will be able to avert bitterness, strife, and schism.

Congregationalism—and this is what our fathers did not clearly see—is an ideal polity. It requires that every member of a church should have received the supernatural and eternal life derived from union with the Lord Jesus Christ. It requires that in every member of a church this life should have complete and permanent supremacy over the inferior energies of human nature. For it is the fundamental assumption of Congregationalism that the Church is the organ of Christ's thought and will. To whatever extent, in any church claiming to be Congregational, this assumption is untrue, the august and sacred prerogatives which the Congregational theory attributes to the ideal church are unrealized. But shall we surrender the polity because it demands a perfection of Christian life which transcends all hope ? Shall we construct an ecclesiastical organization accommodated to the imperfections of those who bear the Christian name but are destitute of the Christian life, or in whom the Christian life is imperfectly developed ? For myself I prefer the loftier and more adventurous path. The possible is hardly worth living for. It is the ideal that kindles enthusiasm and gives inspiration and vigour to all human effort.

It is just three hundred years since the ecclesiastical

authorities were first seriously alarmed by the appearance of those principles of ecclesiastical polity on which the Congregational churches of our own time are organized. It was in 1581 that the Bishop of Norwich wrote to the Lord Treasurer Burleigh that Robert Browne had lately come into his diocese, "and, teaching strange and dangerous doctrine in all disordered manner, had greatly troubled the whole country, and brought many to great disobedience of all law and magistrates." This year, in which we are celebrating the Jubilee of the Congregational Union, may be legitimately regarded as the Tercentenary of English Congregationalism. It was fitting that in celebrating the Jubilee of the Union we should recall the memory of the men who in times of great peril first illustrated and vindicated on English soil the principles of the Congregational polity. We may learn much from the clearness with which they apprehended the true laws which determine the organization of the Christian Church ; we may learn something from their errors. Their courage and their zeal, their invincible loyalty to conscience and to Christ, may give robustness and energy to our less vigorous fidelity ; and from the violence into which they were too often betrayed—violence which was in part the result of a just resentment against intolerable wrongs, in part the result of vehement controversy—we may learn that a generous zeal for the honour of Christ is not always a sure guarantee of Christian charity. In these days it ought to be possible to reconcile an incorruptible fidelity to truth with the obligations of that still nobler grace which is at once the root and the flower of all Christian perfection.

Note to page 14.

Strype's statement (*Parker's Life*, vol. ii. p. 68) that Robert Browne was chaplain to the Duke of Norfolk appears to have been founded on a letter signed by four of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, and requiring the attendance before them of "one Brown, your Grace's chaplain." Strype says the letter was addressed to the Duke of Norfolk. The editor of *Parker's Correspondence* (p. 390), published by the Parker Society, has given this letter, and points out Strype's mistake. The letter is addressed to Kate Brandon, Duchess of Suffolk. It is a chaplain of hers that the Commissioners are hunting down. The original letter is preserved in the Library of the Inner Temple, and my friend Mr. Lionel Crosskey, who has been good enough to examine it for me, reports that the address is "unmistakeable;" it was sent to the Duchess of Suffolk, not to the Duke of Norfolk.

But if Strype was wrong about the letter, might he not have been right about Robert Browne's having been chaplain to the Duke? Clearly not. Browne was a Puritan—perhaps more—before he left Cambridge. How could he have become chaplain to the Duke of Norfolk, who was suspected of being a Catholic, and who, within a year or two after Strype supposes that Browne was his chaplain, was beheaded for taking part in the great Catholic conspiracy against the Queen?

But was Browne chaplain to the Duchess of Suffolk? He might have been. The account given of her exile by Foxe (*Book of Martyrs*, vol. viii. 569–576), and the innumerable references to her in the history of the times of Edward VI., and of Mary, and during the first twenty years of Elizabeth, show that she was a woman of great religious zeal, a very earnest Protestant, resolute, generous, and with a keen, strong, and brilliant intellect. Gardiner never forgave her for one of her thrusts at him. At a great entertainment she wanted to go to dinner with her husband; but as this could not be permitted, she went up to the bishop, took him by the hand, and said, "Forasmuch as I cannot sit down with my lord, whom I love the best in the room, I have chosen thee, whom I love the worst." She was just the kind of woman to give shelter to a young, zealous, and adventurous man like Robert Browne. But in the absence of further evidence the description of her chaplain contained in the letter as "one Brown" is not sufficient to identify him with the founder of English Independency.

And it appears that the Duchess of Suffolk had a chaplain named J. Browne, who was brought before the Council in 1573, with Dering, Field, Wilson, and other Presbyterian Puritans about the famous

Admonition to Parliament. It was this same J. Brown who was implicated in the alleged plot (1574) against the lives of the Archbishop and the Lord Treasurer. The plot was proved to be an invention, and the innocence of the persons charged with the crime was acknowledged.

If we consider,

- (1) That *Robert Browne could not have been chaplain to the Duke of Norfolk*; and
- (2) That it is not probable that the Duchess of Suffolk had one chaplain named *J. Brown* and another named *Robert Browne*; and,
- (3) That *Robert Browne in his account of his own life says nothing about having held a chaplaincy*;

it becomes practically certain that *Strype's statement about his having been a chaplain is altogether erroneous.*

Note to page 28.

The Brownists were sometimes charged with theological heresies, and it is very probable that among those who, under the influence of the Brownist movement, withdrew from the Anglican worship and set up private congregations, some wild doctrines were taught. Writing against the followers of Glover, who having begun, like Browne, with separating from the English Church on the ground of discipline, is charged with having gone far beyond his leader, Bredwell says, "I hear beside that there is one among you who whispereth already in corners that we must not believe in the Holy Ghost." (See Bredwell's *Rasing of the Foundations of Brownism*, p. 117.) Bredwell charges Browne himself with heresy in confounding "the covenant of the law with the covenant of the gospel."

In his Definition of Faith, Browne included *the yielding of ourselves to Christ in newness of life*; and in "the covenant of grace" Browne insisted that, on our side, there must be a *submission to the laws and government of God*. In more modern phraseology, Browne appears to have taught that faith in Christ is a serious recognition of all that Christ claims to be, and includes submission to Him as the moral Ruler of mankind, as well as trust in Him for the pardon of sin and deliverance from eternal death. (See Bredwell's *Rasing of the Foundations*, &c., p. 113.)

II.

LAUD AND THE PURITANS.

BY

HENRY ALLON, D.D.

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II.

LAUD AND THE PURITANS.

I.

A GRAVE difficulty in the treatment of any selected period or phase of history is that it is only part of a greater whole, related to it by a thousand subtle causations and sequences. For the entire of human history, both in its national sections and in its continuity, is one organic development, free as the human will, and yet so ruled by causes and circumstances that no given stage could have been transposed, no event could have occurred independently of its relationships and environment. Great events and great men are therefore the distinctive product of their time, the result of antecedent causes, the expression of transitional forces, the cause of subsequent developments. No great personality of history could have been what he was in any other age or circumstances. His own individuality, indeed, will enter into the formative causes of his time; exercises of his personal will, effects of his distinctive power, influences of his peculiar character will, more or less, stamp his individuality upon his age. Great is the might of genius; its records are monumental. A Homer, a Dante, a Shakespeare, a Newton, a Napoleon seems to rule his age as from an Olympus. Had they not been, the world would have been moulded differently. In any age such men would have been great

formative forces ; but they were precisely what they were, and did exactly what they did, because of the circumstances which moulded them, and upon which they acted. However great, the man receives more than he can give ; the cause of much, he is caused by much more. He may modify the events of his generation ; he cannot radically change them. He is the birth of his time, the child of his age. Men make epochs because the times have ripened for an epoch. The hour makes possible the man. Hence we can no more understand an epoch isolated from the development of the generations producing it, than we can understand characters from an isolated section of biography.

Thus the forces and fermentings of many generations produced the religious conflicts of the Stuart period—conflicts which in some form or other were inevitable, but which were determined in their peculiar character, and precipitated in their occurrence by the personal characteristics of men like James I., Charles I., and Laud. All were developments of previous times ; all were expressions of contemporaneous forces ; all were moulding forces of the times that followed them. Hence we cannot understand either the conflict itself or the actors in it without some general knowledge of preceding causes and surrounding circumstances.

Anglicanism and Puritanism are simply local expressions of two great normal tendencies of human nature. In their extreme developments we designate them respectively Superstition and Rationalism : as modified in the actual religious life of England, we know them as Ritualism and Evangelicalism. They did not begin with the Reformation ; they are not in their root principles peculiar to Christianity. In almost every religion of history they have been in antagonism, typically represented by the priest and the prophet. In Hinduism they appear

as the Brahman and the Buddhist ; in Mohammedanism as the Shiites and Sonnites, or Wahabees. In Judaism the prophet becomes a necessity for withstanding the formalism and superstition of the priest. The inspiration of the man who speaks in God's name to the people is radically different from that of the man who speaks in the people's name to God. In our Lord's day the one tendency was represented by the Pharisees, the other by the Sadducees or the Essenes. In the Early Christian Church the Montanists, the Novatians (*καθαροί*, or Puritans, as they called themselves) re-appearing in the twelfth century as the Albigenses, were Puritan uprisings against sacerdotal tendencies. Throughout the history of the Romish Church the two elements have been in perpetual conflict—the Papal and the anti-Papal, the sacerdotal and the evangelical. One needs only to recall the names of Savonarola, Juan de Valdes, John Huss, Jerome of Prague, Wycliffe and the Lollards, the Waldenses, Luther, Pascal and the Port Royalists, down to the old Catholics of our own day, to see how recurrent and persistent have been evangelical protests against Romish sacerdotalism. The conflict was in all cases within the Romish Church before it was without it.

The Reformation was a Puritan movement, an outburst of the more spiritual conception of the Church against the ecclesiastical tyranny of Rome, an uprising of the religious sentiment against its moral corruptions.

The Reformation itself, again, carried within its bosom, as perhaps every church must, these two normal human tendencies. It was a partial and in some of its developments an accidental movement. A revolt of religious feeling from superstition and corruptness—which under any circumstances would have been inevitable—it was yet actually conditioned and limited by the circumstances and individualities of the time. In some countries, as in England, the actual movement was largely directed and

modified by the political circumstances and the personal passions of the monarch ; although Wycliffe and other reformers before the Reformation had made it possible by the preparation for it of public feeling.

The Reformation, therefore, stopped far short of a thorough regeneration of the Church, of a pure, spiritual realization of Christian life, perhaps it must be said even of a true conception of it. It was a tangled compromise, the result of a complex and indecisive struggle. The best of the men who sought reform were but partially emancipated from the traditional ideas of their age. Some of the reformers, not among the best, were not even purely religious in their motives. Lutheranism in Germany, Anglicanism in England are but sorry realizations of spiritual Christianity. Neither sought simply to return to the pure spirituality of the early Church, but only more or less to reform the grosser abuses of existing institutions ; some on theological and religious grounds, some on moral grounds, and others on merely political grounds.

On the other hand, the defenders of the Church against the assaults of the reformers—also men very various in their characteristics, motives, and religiousness—either resisted uncompromisingly, or conceded partially and grudgingly, yielding what they must and holding what they could. The actual Reformation, therefore, was an empirical compromise. Thus the two tendencies were represented on the continent, first by Lutheranism and Zwinglianism, then by Lutheranism and Calvinism, and in England by various modifications of Anglicanism and Puritanism. Substantially, therefore, Anglicanism and Puritanism are coeval with the Reformation itself ; two nations struggled in its womb.

Naturally the Puritan, or more spiritual tendency, was the first movement, and for awhile was almost unresisted. It was the prime impulse of the movement of which

Anglicanism soon became the conservative modification. Henry VIII. never became a Protestant. He lived and died a Roman Catholic. He was never more than a Romish reformer of the Roman Church. We need not deny to him religious conscience and motive; but it is notorious that his policy was largely actuated by political considerations and by personal passions. But the religious reformers of his time were necessarily Puritan rather than Anglican. Cranmer, and the bishops of the Reformation generally, after passing through a not unnatural series of convictions, ultimately came to recognize the validity of Presbyterian orders and sacraments. Bishop Cosin partook of the Lord's Supper in Presbyterian churches when on the continent, and says: "It cannot be proved that any set and exact particular form is recommended to us in the Word of God."* Archbishop Ussher says: "For the testifying of my communion with these churches, which I do love and honour as true members of the Church universal, I do profess that with like affection I would receive the blessed sacrament at the hands of the Dutch ministers in Holland, as I would do at the hands of the French ministers." Hooker protests against the Divine right of any form of church government whatsoever. "Let them" (the bishops) "continually bear in mind that it is rather the force of custom . . . than that any such true and heavenly law can be showed by the evidence whereof it may of a truth appear that the Lord Himself hath appointed Presbyters for ever to be under the regiment of Bishops." †

"The great Hooker," says Warburton, "was not only against, but laid down principles that have entirely subverted, all pretence to a Divine unalterable right in any form of church government whatever."

* *Answer to Abstract*, sect. 18.

† *Eccl. Polity*, vii. cap. v. § 8.

Keble, Hooker's latest editor, says: "Neither Hooker nor Jewel nor Whitgift ventured to urge the exclusive claims of Episcopacy. . . . Numbers have been admitted to the ministry of the Church of England with no better than Presbyterian ordination."

Stillingfleet says: "The main ground for settling episcopal government in this nation was not on any pretence of Divine right, but the conveniency of that form to the state and condition of this Church at the time of the Reformation."*

Bishop Hall says: "Blessed be God, there is no difference in any essential matter between the Church of England and her sisters of the Reformation. . . . The only difference is in the form of outward administration: wherein also we are so far agreed as that we all profess this form not to be essential to the Church."†

And the testimonies might be multiplied indefinitely. It is important to insist upon this position of the early reformers, as it shows that modern Anglicans in their lofty claims are hopelessly at variance with their ecclesiastical progenitors.

The impetus of the conflict with Rome made Anglican sacerdotalism with its claims, analogous to those of Rome, for a long time impossible. Anglicanism was simply a later reflux of the wave of the Reformation. It was the reactionary movement of the more sacerdotal order of mind. The agony of the Reformation over, the two parties in the Reformed Church began to estimate results; and then the strenuous and fluctuating internal struggle began which has continued to our own day. Men of the Anglican way began to fear that the Reformation had conceded too much, and they concluded that it certainly ought not to concede more. It soon formulated its own pale reflection

* *Irenicum*, p. 10.

† *Peacemaker*, sect. 6.

of the assumptions of Rome—its apostolic succession, its sacerdotal ministry, its sacramental efficacy, its symbolical and sensuous ritualism, and its authoritative ecclesiasticism. To Bancroft, more than to any other man, the formulating of the Anglican theory seems due. On the other hand, the Puritans soon realized how far short of spiritual and primitive Christianity the Reformation had fallen; how much, therefore, remained to be done. And of course the commencement of actual conflict intensified the characteristic feeling of each.

Circumstances, however, imposed a series of compromises, as they do at the present day, fluctuating according to political changes, and to the personal character and tendencies of successive monarchs. The mere names of Henry VIII., Edward VI., Mary, Elizabeth, James I., Charles I., Cromwell, and Charles II., sufficiently indicate the violent alternations of the early course of the Reformation in England. The natural result is the complex and discordant elements of the standards of the Established Church—"its Arminian clergy, its Popish liturgy, its Calvinistic articles"—a fruitful source of chronic contention which, in the very nature of things, must continue so long as the standards are maintained. Both parties are right and both are wrong. Neither of them can possibly be altogether right or altogether wrong. Compromise—a *modus vivendi*—is in the very nature of the case impossible. You cannot compromise contradictions; an ignominious and impotent toleration of them is the only theoretic possibility of peace. Peace, in the Anglican Church as it is, can never be more than war kept down by force. A perilous measure of the old Romish leaven remained unpurged. This the Anglican party sought to conserve, and the Puritan party to expel.

The policy of Elizabeth was conditioned by this confused struggle. Unlike her father, Elizabeth was a Pro-

testant. Accepting the Reformation, she was sternly antagonistic to Rome, and resolutely withstood all its attempts to re-establish itself in England. Imperious in the assertion of her royal prerogative, she claimed in the Reformed Church the regal place occupied by the Pope in the Church of Rome; she would be its absolute ecclesiastical head and governor. Denying this to the Pope, the only alternative that presented itself to her was to claim it for herself. Romanist and Separatist were therefore repressed with equal rigour and remorselessness. In the realm of England there should be but one Church, of which she would be the supreme head.

Her first Act of Uniformity, passed in the first year of her reign, simply sought to compel this. It was imperiously carried through Parliament, despite the protests of the bishops and of both Houses of Convocation; and when, in consequence, the bishops resigned their sees, she proceeded to make new ones. The difficulty of obtaining consecrating bishops was a grave one. The consecration of Matthew Parker, her first Protestant archbishop, was so doubtful as to its validity that it became necessary to pass an Act of Parliament to affirm it, which declared "the regal manner of making and consecrating of archbishops and bishops of the realm to be good, lawful, and perfect." So that the Anglican chain of succession has one very dubious and precarious link. The Act was a vain attempt to quell or to regulate the strong Puritan spirit of the Reformation. The Elizabethan struggle with Rome culminated in the Armada, and in the exigencies of the Protestants of the continent, which aroused a strong feeling in England, both of sympathy with the Protestants and of impatience with the temporizing selfishness of the Queen. Both gave a great impetus and intensity to Puritan feeling.

This was further greatly aided by the intellectual movement of the Renaissance which spread over Europe, and

of which, among the allies of the Lutheran Reformation, Erasmus is the most prominent representative. In England, Spenser, Shakespeare, and Bacon were its glorious products. The spirit of intellectual as well as the spirit of religious freedom was abroad, and could not be restrained by either sacerdotal assumption or political absolutism. It was a life that had been called into existence, not a creed, a code, or an ecclesiasticism. At first, the life in its impetuosity subordinated both creeds and church forms. Thus Anglicanism was at first Calvinistic in its theology; only under the Stuarts did it become Arminian. At first, Puritanism was Episcopal, then Presbyterian, then Congregational. It was first a religious movement within the Established Church, and only at a later period an ecclesiastical movement without it.

Moreover, emancipation from Rome, and the struggle which it demanded, had developed a powerful spirit of individualism, intelligence, freedom, and strength. And of this, religious Puritanism was but one, although perhaps the chief element in the nation's life. Political and intellectual life had also strong developments. And all were inimical to both sacerdotalism and political absolutism. Thus theological and ecclesiastical questions acquired a prominence and an importance never perhaps equalled in the national life of England.

One of the most remarkable indications of this was the rapidity and entireness with which the Bible came to be the book of the people. Only sixty-seven years elapsed between the licensing of Coverdale's Bible by Henry VIII., in 1537, and the death of Elizabeth, in 1604. The great Bible to which Cranmer wrote a preface was ordered by the King's proclamation to be set up in churches only in 1540.

"It was wonderful" (says Foxe) "to see with what joy this book of God was received not only among the learned sort, and those

that were noted for lovers of the Reformation, but generally, all England over, among all the vulgar and common people ; and with what greediness God's Word was read, and what resort to places where the reading of it was. Everybody that could bought the book, or busily read it, or got others to read it to them if they could not themselves, and divers more elderly people learned to read on purpose ; and even little boys flocked among the rest to hear portions of the Holy Scripture read." *

Then, in 1546, the King prohibited all other translations, and a great destruction of Tyndale's and Coverdale's Bibles took place. It was an age of few and costly books. To the people generally, therefore, the Bible was accessible only through the ponderous folio volumes chained to their stands in parish churches. It was not until 1560 that the Genevan Bible appeared as a moderate quarto, printed in Roman letter, and divided into chapters and verses. Its portable size and reasonable cost soon made it the household book of English-speaking peoples. Between 1568 and 1611 sixty editions of it had been published, and within this brief period the Bible became almost as much the possession of the people as it is now. The controversies of the time made it a necessary book of reference, and the religious life of the Puritans was nurtured by it ; so that it gave phrases to the common speech, and arguments to the common people, it imbued literature with its ideas and forms of grandeur and beauty, it infused its spirit into the common life of the people, and gave an archaic cast to their speech. Its influence was powerful in Parliamentary debate, and its impress was upon the laws that were enacted. It became, in short, the most precious possession of the people's life, the law of their conduct, the source of their strength, and the inspiration of their joy. Never, perhaps, in the whole course of its history has this wonderful book had so rapid and so large an influence, or so powerfully entered into a

* Quoted by Westcott, *History of the English Bible*, p. 107.

people's life. Little more than half a century of Bible-reading gave it the marvellous place of rule and of familiarity which the controversies of the Commonwealth demonstrated.

The Puritanism of England had taken a Calvinistic form; at first in common with Anglicanism; but as gradually the latter passed into Arminianism, Calvinism became the distinctive theology of the Puritan. There are obvious reasons for this, and they have much to do with the character of the conflict.

In its root idea Calvinism is simply an intense individual sense of God, and especially as opposed to the idea of a vicarious Church, or the *opus operatum* of a sacrament. The logical sequences which theology has deduced from Calvinism are to be distinguished from this its root idea; they are no necessary part of it, they are not inevitable inferences from it, they have often been its perversion and weakness. They are, not perhaps unnatural, but yet indubitable exaggerations of a great conception, profound in its theological truth and mighty in its religious force. From Paul to Augustine, from Augustine to Calvin, there are many degrees of theological development, and of the predestinarian dogmas, which the remorseless logic of Calvin urged to sequences of terrible and repellent fatalism, from which men are now happily recoiling. In these libellous perversions of the true doctrine of God's grace, grace is destroyed by her own champions. But how wonderfully dominant the root idea of Calvinism has been among all the great religious peoples of history! It finds embodiment in the mythology of the old Greeks: the Moirai of Homer, the Fates of the tragedians, are greater than the gods. We see it in the fatalism of ancient Buddhism, and of modern Mohammedanism. It was the predominant characteristic of old Hebrew religious feeling. It was the distinctive doctrine of Paul, of Augustine, of the school-

men. It was the vital force of the Reformation. In Switzerland, France, Holland, Scotland, England, and America it has been the strongest inspiration of piety, liberty, and martyr fidelity.

Almost necessarily Calvinism was the form of the revolt against the sacerdotalism and self-righteousness of Rome. It became the inspiring force of the Reformation, and ruled alike for awhile both its Puritan and Anglican elements. Sacerdotalism and sacramentarianism are almost necessarily Arminian. A vicarious religion implies salvation by works. Calvinism, moreover, is essentially individual; not only does it recognize the provision of salvation as of grace, it conceives of its realization only by exercises of personal faith.

Elizabeth had an instinctive repugnance to Calvinism. Its entire spirit was antagonistic to both her ecclesiastical autocracy and her political absolutism. And yet by a strange irony of fate her fortunes were bound up with it. Her first bishops were all Calvinists. In her mortal struggle with Rome she was compelled to identify herself with the Calvinistic Huguenots of France, and with the Calvinistic Protestants of the Netherlands. Only by her sympathy with the struggling Protestantism of the continent could she arouse the enthusiasm of her own Calvinistic subjects; and the Protestantism of England was almost wholly Calvinistic. Not only was it impossible for her to break with her Calvinistic subjects, it was necessary to conciliate them and array them as defenders of her throne.

The chief influences of her reign, therefore, tended to the development of Puritanism, which at the close of it was the dominant religious force of the nation. Antagonism to Popery, indeed, inflamed by the massacre of the French Huguenots, by the atrocities of Alva in the Netherlands, and by the abortive Armada, had grown to a white heat of both political and religious passion.

It is easy to understand how Calvinistic Puritanism must be obnoxious to monarchs claiming prerogatives such as those contended for by the Tudor and Stuart sovereigns. Essentially individual, pious, and democratic, Puritanism puts first the individual relations of men to God, and subordinates to God's will all human rule and service. It will not render to Cæsar the things that are God's. The monarch is only God's supreme earthly servant, whose rule over men may not invade their personal responsibilities to God. Intensely loyal the Puritans were; loyal not to an abstract claim, an absolute authority, but to a divinely-ordained function; loyal to the sovereign so long as the sovereign was loyal to God. If, therefore, the sovereign proved unfaithful to his Divine entrustment, if he usurped Divine prerogatives, invaded inalienable personal rights, arrayed himself against the Divine order, the very religiousness of the Puritan compelled him to resist. His loyalty was not the blind, abject loyalty of slavish submission to mere authority, irrespective of the sphere of its exercise and the quality of its acts, but the higher and nobler loyalty which individual responsibility, religiousness, and freedom inspire—the loyalty of judgment and conscience. Rational conviction and moral approval were its necessary conditions.

Such freedom of spirit and of service were diametrically opposed to the imperious absolutism of Tudor and Stuart rule, which claimed not the intelligent, willing service of free men, but the blind, implicit submission of slaves. For instance, in the trial of John Hampden, Justice Berkeley laid down this dictum: "The law is itself an old and trusty servant of the King's; it is his instrument or means which he useth to govern his people by. I never read nor heard that *lex* was *rex*; but it is common and most true that *rex* is *lex*." *

* Quoted by Hallam *Const. Hist.* ii. 22.

To what extravagant and even blasphemous lengths the doctrine of the Divine prerogative of kings was carried, we shall see when we come to speak of Laud's "tuning the pulpits" in Charles I.'s time.

The claim for absolutism in the Church was as unqualified as that for absolutism in the State. The Puritan conscience could recognize neither the one nor the other. To it the nation was as much of Divine ordination as the throne; the responsibilities of the individual were every whit as inviolable as those of the monarch. So that instinctively and radically Puritanism was antagonistic to all absolutism. This both the Tudors and the Stuarts saw. It became, therefore, their avowed purpose to manipulate the more moderate of the school, and to "harry out of the land" the intractable. And thus the inevitable issue was joined.

When James I. succeeded to the English throne he was a Presbyterian and a Calvinist. On leaving Scotland he had addressed the General Assembly of the Scottish Church, and had "thanked the Almighty that he was born in the time of the light of the gospel; and in such a place as to be king of such a Church, the sincerest kirk in the world. . . . As to our neighbour kirk of England, their service is an ill-said mass in English; they want nothing of the mass but the lifting;" and he pledged himself that within twelve months he would "stand by the Church of which he was sovereign, and prove the advocate of its ministry."*

But on his accession his conversion to Episcopacy, Anglicanism, Arminianism, and Popery was very rapid. He became first the ecclesiastical then the doctrinal opponent of Puritanism, and adopted his well-known motto, "No bishop, no king." The sufficient explanation

* Stanford's *Studies of the Great Rebellion*, p. 73.

is his absolute theory of kingship, and the radical insincerity of his character. James was one of the men sometimes met with in life who seem to be destitute of either the sentiment or the sense of truth. He has been called "the greatest liar" as he was "the wisest fool" that ever sat upon the English throne.

In James's reign the Catholic reaction on the continent and the issue of the thirty years' war, which restored to Rome much that she had lost, had in England excited the hopes and stimulated the energies of all friends of Rome; while the eager Protestant hope of a reform of the entire Church of Christ had well-nigh died out. On the other hand, the Romish hope of re-converting England had gathered strength, its predominant Puritanism notwithstanding. Rome, then as ever, was slow to understand the difference between the personal tendencies of the monarch and the prevailing spirit of the people.

Few periods of our national history are more perplexing to the student than the complicated currents of thought and feeling—political, theological, and social—in James's reign. In addition to secret Romanists and the main controversy with Rome, there were controversies between Puritan and Anglican, and between Calvinist and Arminian. Hobbes had propounded his deistical speculations, Chillingworth and Hales their Broad Church Neo-Platonism; while the revival of letters had given a great impulse to the study of the Greek philosophers, especially of Plato and Aristotle. Romish emissaries were intriguing; Anglican priests and Puritan religionists were plotting and counter-plotting. All kinds of ideas, theological and ecclesiastical, philosophical and political, were seething in the boiling cauldron of the national mind.*

* A vivid picture of this is presented in "*John Inglesant, A Novel*"—a very remarkable and able study of those times.

Puritanism was in the ascendant, but its character and contention were changing. Under Elizabeth it struggled with Popery for toleration; under James it struggled against Popery for existence. Its attitude was becoming more sternly resistant, and its temper more uncompromisingly resentful, as it saw the claims and encroachments of Papal absolutism, and the watchful and determined promotion of Anglicanism—which it justly construed as a veiled approximation to Rome. The feeling which, in Elizabeth's time, was excited by her intolerance, and by her selfish and half-hearted policy towards the great struggle of Protestantism on the continent, was intensified under the Popish proclivities of James and Charles into stern resistance and martyr determination. It gradually came to be a settled conviction that these monarchs had deliberately determined to destroy Protestantism itself, and to lead back again to Rome the Church and the nation that had revolted from her. This conviction led to the determination to stake property, liberty, life itself, upon the issue of an uncompromising resistance. Hence the bitter hatred felt by the Puritans towards men like Strafford and Laud, whose high Anglican policy they regarded as either purposely or unconsciously preparing for this issue. The conflict, therefore, was one in which principle and conscience, prerogative and patriotism, policy and passion, forbade compromise; and the usual effects followed.

The Stuarts, moreover, had to contend not merely with the religious Puritans, but with an impalpable spirit of freedom in the nation, which they felt to be inimical to their dearest purposes. This again modified their policy and intensified their efforts. In their blind resentment they became tyrannical, unscrupulous, and desperate; and thus forced on their inevitable doom.

On the other hand, what at first were only imaginary

fears on the part of the Puritans became at length indisputable realities. James was bent on restoring Popery, and if Charles stopped short of this it was for the sake of an Anglicanism almost identical with it. And to the Puritans Popery was the embodiment not only of deadly theological error and of practical religious apostasy, but also of ecclesiastical and political usurpation and tyranny. Indeed, throughout history Popery and democracy have been as incompatible in the State as in the Church. And the instinct of the patriot, as well as that of the Puritan arrayed him in uncompromising antagonism to it. No element of polemical intensity was lacking, therefore, on either side. The conflict necessarily came to be *à l'outrance*. Either Stuart absolutism must be overthrown or English Protestantism must be extirpated. The conditions were such that compromise was impossible.

And it was well for English liberties that the conflict was thus forced. Through this special and imperative issue great principles of constitutional right were radically established; fundamental liberties were secured which, with a vaguer issue, might have embarrassed English life, and vitiated, if not hindered, the progress of freedom for ages. Seeds of sturdy things were then sown, and noble trees of righteousness have sprung from them. There is no exaggeration in Hume's assertion that to the Puritans of the Commonwealth England owes her liberties.

Another important element must be noted in this general estimate of the forces engaged in this deadly conflict. Just as, in spite of her personal antipathies, the patriotism of Elizabeth compelled her to avail herself of the aid of her Puritan subjects, so, in spite of their imperfect sympathies with the Puritans, the patriotism of all lovers of liberty compelled them to take the Puritan side of the battle. Not only were the Puritans not alone in their resistance to the King and to his two chief coun-

sellors Strafford and Laud; it is possible that alone they might have failed. It is, however, proverbially difficult to reduce the equation of an "if," or to write the history of "what might have been." Moral forces are difficult to estimate; they have unsuspected powers of vitality, germination, and persistence. The historical fact is that the patriotic party was in potent alliance with the Puritanical party, the spirit of liberty with the inspirations of religion. We may, however, note that, as ever, the religious inspiration was the stronger of the two; and that without it it is certain that the other would not have succeeded.

Nor is it a reproach to the purest and intensest religiousness that it constrains others who have no sympathy with itself—that its camp-following is very miscellaneous. It is both legitimate and necessary, whatever our contention, to accept whatever measure of sympathy its principles may inspire. The Evangelical religionist may accept the help of even the most blatant atheist, so far as they have convictions in common. If the sentiment of liberty be common, it would be preposterous to refuse his contention for it on the ground that in other things they differ. In no other department of life do men so act. The devoutest believer in his Bible does not, in a general election, refuse the vote of the beer-house. It is the demand of common sense that men should co-operate, so far as they have common principles. As in most great conflicts for human right, Religion led against the Stuarts, and men of all religious creeds, or of no religious creed, inspired by the love of liberty, followed in her train.

II.

Concerning Puritanism in its social and moral characteristics, it is scarcely possible here to speak; although these entered vitally into the struggle, and much needs yet to be said in its vindication. The Puritan, it is

affirmed, was unreasonable and impracticable, fanatical and intolerant. He forfeited, therefore, the sympathies of a broader and more humane life. It is a familiar and reiterated reproach. Occasion against him must be found somehow, and if his principles be unimpeachable, let his foibles be magnified. Even men like Dean Hook and Canon Mozley never lose an opportunity of exhibiting the Puritans as ascetic, morose, kill-joys who, in the name of religion, sought to reduce life to the social conditions of the monastery and the penitentiary, and would fain have moulded society on the pattern of Calvin's sumptuary laws at Geneva. It is worth while to fix the precise truth and value of the scornful imputation. For ridicule is often a more potent weapon than truth, and any accusation that generates an inimical spirit is formidable.

May we not say first, and generally, that if men are to be judged by their fruits of life, and not by mere circumstantial incidents, it certainly is not the Puritan who at this critical period of our history appears at a disadvantage? The tree that produced such fruits of civil and religious liberty, of personal and political righteousness, of godliness, virtue, and heroism, could not have been greatly vitiated in intrinsic qualities, whatever the roughness of its bark or the grotesqueness of its foliage. The great principle maintained by Puritanism was the religious redemption of the nation, the purification of its social life, the righteousness of its political rule, the consecration to great human interests of its lofty freedom. Throughout its history this has been the aim of English Puritanism. There is no class or type of her national life to whom England owes so much, and of which she has so much cause to be proud. And if, in the pursuit of this end, the tendency of Puritanism was to undue severity, or even to ascetic extravagance, this has been the tendency of moral and religious reformers

in all ages and religions ; these are the natural faults of its virtues, which gross licentiousness and blatant godlessness almost compelled. The political annals of England have no names more eminent in personal and public virtue. Her religious records have no characters more noble in their saintliness. Her literature has no names of loftier genius or more comprehensive learning.

Certainly the personal and political characteristics of the men of the Commonwealth, whose cases are most easily tested—the purity of their homes, the piety of their churches, the righteousness of their government, the heroic inspirations of their patriotism—do not suffer in comparison with those of Charles II. and the men of the Restoration. If the alternative be austerity or profligacy, we must on all rational grounds be permitted to prefer the purer aberration. As representative men, John Hampden, John Milton, John Selden, John Owen, and John Howe are scarcely to be blushed for. Most men would on both professional and ethical grounds prefer Cromwell's Ironsides to Charles's Cavaliers. Cromwell's home life need not shrink from a comparison with the court life of Charles II. One thinks of the terrible picture of his deathbed at Whitehall—the anterooms crowded with courtiers, the children of his paramours round his bed, the king now secretly receiving extreme unction, and again commending to his brother the Duchess of Portsmouth and Nell Gwynn, then grimly apologizing for being “a most unconscionable time dying.” Who would not rather stand with Cromwell and his alleged solitudes “whether he was one of the elect?” Puritan preachers and churches need not be apologized for in presence of the shameless irreligion and corruption of bishops, clergy, and congregations, as described by Laud in his Reports, and which he so strenuously sought to reform. Cromwell's “triers” were better than Episcopal patrons. His ecclesiastical government sincerely sought

the religious good of the people, and his catholic spirit disregarded ecclesiastical distinctions. Wherever a godly pastor could be found, whether Episcopalian, Presbyterian, or Congregationalist, he was appointed to a parish. While the moral character of the people at home and the righteousness, dignity, and moral influence of the government abroad have rarely, if ever, been surpassed. Make every allowance reasonable and unreasonable for suspicions of hypocrisy and accusations of fanaticism, the stern truth remains that the government of Cromwell may fairly claim a higher nobility of righteousness, virtue, and patriotism than any other in our history. One really owes an apology to the Puritans for even the suggestion of such comparisons.

But is there anything to forgive—at any rate that the religious Anglican has any pretence to forgive—in the religious Puritan? For such judgments are comparative. To most men fanaticism is a religiousness or morality that in the strictness of its demands is in excess of their own. Precisely tested, fanaticism is a strictness that is in excess of normal requirements, and that imposes upon human life unnecessary restrictions and obligations. But the first question to be determined is, What is the normal standard? Who is to fix, who is to apply it? Did Lord Beaconsfield's Government formulate it when they determined that politics are not practically amenable to ordinary principles of righteousness? Are the members of Mr. Gladstone's Government fanatics for practically maintaining that common ethics apply as imperatively to treaties and to wars as they do to commercial transactions or to personal obligations? Test the Puritan by God's law of righteousness and religiousness, and he may challenge comparison with any type of men that the world has known.

No doubt asceticism was the characteristic tendency of Puritanism, and of later much more than of earlier

Puritanism. As early as 1605 Ben Jonson in his *Volpone* had satirized the fantasies of the Puritans, more especially their habit of giving grotesque descriptive names to their children. And in 1614 he published his *Bartholomew Fair*, intended as a satire upon them, and in a somewhat scurrilous way ridiculing what had apparently become some of their characteristics. Thus a Puritan minister is named Rabbi-zeal-of-the-Lord-Busy; another Puritan character is called Mrs. Win-the-fight. Ridicule is lavished upon "the language of Canaan," and "the small pointed ruff," and upon the Puritan protests against music and balls, their long graces, their snuffling way of talking, &c.—

"Sucking up their hum and ha,
Precise, pure, illuminating brother,
Who will dull you forth a libel, or a sanctified lie
Between every spoonful of a nativity-pie."

The asceticism of Puritanism was largely engendered by profligacy and persecution. It had to repudiate so much of the social life of its day, it was denied so much of the natural freedom of its own life, that there is no wonder that it became austere. Its austerity, however, is greatly exaggerated. Is there any portraiture of English life more graceful in its culture, more sweet in its refinement and tenderness, than that which Mrs. Hutchison has drawn of her Puritan husband, with his love of hawking, his skill in dancing and fencing, his culture in the fine arts, his passion for music, his delight in his garden? The scholarliness and catholic sympathies of Puritan literature have no unworthy representatives in Selden and Milton. If Prynne denounces the stage in His *Histriomastix*, Milton writes for it his *Comus*, and eulogizes it in his *L'Allegro*.

"Then to the well-trod stage anon,
If Johnson's learned sock be on,

Or sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child,
Warble his native wood-notes wild."

Who more than he enjoyed

"Laughter, holding both his sides,"

or had nobler sympathies with august religious services ?

"To walk the studious cloister pale,
And love the high-embowèd roof,
With antick pillars mossy proof,
And storied windows, richly dight,
Casting a dim, religious light.
Here let the pealing organ blow
To the full-voiced quire below
In service high, and anthems clear,
As may with sweetness through mine ear
Dissolve me into ecstasies,
And bring all heaven before mine eyes."

And yet Milton was a Puritan of the Puritans.

Cromwell, too, was a cultured gentleman, entering fully into the enjoyment of the æsthetic culture and noble pleasures of life. Dr. Halley's *History of Puritanism in Lancashire* abounds in pictures of cultured Puritan life, of family festivities, of ardent field sports. A life as full, as varied, and as refined as that of any class of society—more so, indeed, than most of the cavalier life of the day, because more pure and sympathetic. No man enjoys the true material good of life more than the spiritually religious man.

If, then, by the profligacy of social life, and the shameless irreligiousness and corruption of ecclesiastics, Puritan reformers were ultimately driven to sumptuary laws, both in church and house, small blame to them. When disease is acute, severe remedies are imperative, and normal conditions of life impossible ; when the most precious things of liberty and life are at stake much may have to be sacrificed that anything may be saved. You amputate a limb to save life ; the Russians burn Moscow to save

their country. Men who do such things are not fanatics. He is a pitiful moralist who can jibe at the stern temper, or rough speech, or plain garb of men engaged in mortal struggle with tyranny, profligacy, and superstition. The old Hebrew prophets were scarcely drawing-room exquisites or jocular companions; Jeremiah would no doubt provoke many a scornful taunt for his Puritanism. They are but shallow fools who forget the momentous issues of such struggles in their ridicule of the garb and speech of the combatants; who go into wars of mortal conflict "with a light heart." The Puritans had the most serious work to do that ever had to be done in England. Everything precious to the life of a nation in public government and in private virtue was at stake; and the seriousness of the work wrought a corresponding gravity in the men who did it. Estimates of life and feeling towards its pleasures were in their sternness more natural than normal. It needs no elaborate reasoning to determine the temper most befitting this supreme crisis in our history—that of the praying Puritan or that of the profligate Cavalier.

On no point in the estimate need the advocates of Puritanism let judgment go by default. Hardly can *moral and religious earnestness* be deemed a reproach. The shame belongs to those in whom it is lacking. Can there be a greater anomaly of human life than tepid or conventional religiousness? Only the religious earnestness of the Puritan saved the Church and the State; but for it religion would have been lost in superstition, and liberty destroyed by despotism. Scarcely would the Anglican rebukers of Puritanism venture to suggest as of nobler characteristics the Buckinghams of Stuart politics, or the venal and corrupt Churchmen of Stuart ecclesiasticism. When all in political life that is dear to patriots, and all in religious life that is dear to pious men, is assailed with the avowed purpose of destroying it, are men to be ridiculed

for earnestness because their estimate of both impels them to sacrifice amenities of life, to risk property, liberty, even life itself for their defence; or because they "hate even the garment spotted with the flesh"? Is it not time that, in the light of the indisputable facts, this flippant absurdity should cease? Is any incongruity so grotesque as cant about cant—casting out devils by Beelzebub?

But were not the Puritans *exclusive in their contention* and intolerant in their power? Much, again, must be admitted. Principles of religious liberty as we recognize them were not then even dreamed of; although Cromwell, Selden, Milton, and Locke came nearer to their recognition than any men of their generation. Puritanism was sometimes intolerant. It fell into the cardinal error of all intolerance; it thought itself right, and sometimes employed unjustifiable methods of maintaining the right. But neither the instances nor the measure are easy to demonstrate. Try it fairly by the light of its own day, and let it bear the full blame of any inconsistency that can be proved against it. It will not amount to much. We may say more: characteristically, it was in its toleration far before its time.

What a strange obliviousness it is, not only of the past but of the present, that permits an Anglican of our own day to bring a charge of intolerance against the Puritans of the Commonwealth. From the beginning of the Reformation, Puritanism has always been in the van of civil and religious liberty. Cranmer and the Reformation bishops were so in their recognition of the legitimacy, co-equality, and brotherhood of all the Reformation churches. The intolerant theory of the Divine right of Anglican Episcopacy was not a Puritan imagination; it was a figment invented by Bancroft and developed by Laud, for the sake of destroying religious liberty in England, and investing English Episcopacy with the intolerant assumptions of Rome.

Throughout their history, with very few exceptions, the

Puritans have recognized "the communion of saints," and have practically maintained the fellowship of all true churches of Christ. With equal uniformity this has been repudiated by Anglicanism. Was Laud tolerant? Is Dr. Littledale? Scarcely can a modern Episcopal reference to Nonconformists be cited that does not either denounce them or condescend to them. When are they spoken of with the unconscious feeling of equal ecclesiastical validity, which neither rebukes nor assumes? The very foundation of a church claiming Divine right is exclusiveness and intolerance. It inscribes over its portals, "The temple of the Lord are we." Than the Anglican Church in England—there is not at the present moment a sect more intolerant. Notwithstanding its insular character and Lilliputian magnitude, it solemnly unchurches all the non-episcopal churches of Christendom, denies their ministers, and invalidates their sacraments; and with an infatuation that was as characteristic of Laud's time as of our own, asseverates the most when justifying itself the least.

Was Cromwell intolerant, who, notwithstanding the political exigencies which prelacy imposed upon him, never permitted any individual to suffer for merely religious opinions, and whose "triers" disregarded ecclesiastical distinctions in their appointments? Was Milton intolerant, whose lofty pleadings for liberty are still the most eloquent advocacy that it can claim? Was Bunyan intolerant, who, poor and unlettered, and belonging to one of the narrowest of the Evangelical churches, presents in his great Puritan epic—itself the very incarnation of Evangelical Calvinism—the most catholic conception of the religious life ever written? From the beginning of it to the end not a trace of exclusiveness is to be found. Wherever spiritual life is, Bunyan recognizes a saint. He is intolerant only of sin and hypocrisy, as being incompatible with fundamental religious life. Not a single sectarian or

ecclesiastical conception is to be found in it. There is no baptistery near the wicket-gate, where certainly the Anglican would have placed a font. Faithful goes to heaven without either church or sacrament; he passes by the house Beautiful altogether. Whereas an Anglican would have insisted that out of the true Church (meaning his own) no man is safe, and would have surrounded the simple supper with accessories and symbols of solemn mysteries. The Divine instinct of spiritual and catholic Christianity kept Bunyan from marring his grand conception of the Christian life by any vestige of exclusiveness.

The Puritan did exclude from his church all who were not spiritual disciples of Christ. The Divine Master Himself did the same. Not to do this were to falsify and destroy the fundamental conception of the Church itself. While the Anglican admits all decent parishioners who will acknowledge his ecclesiasticism, but excludes from the covenant of grace all who refuse it, even the most religious, the Puritan recognizes as of the true Church all who love the Lord Jesus Christ, whatever their ecclesiastical communion.

Which is the true Catholic? If I listen to Anglican Episcopal charges, or to clerical addresses, I am told that the Anglican conscience compels a denial of Congregational or Presbyterian churches. But this is simply the plea of all intolerance. All the worse, one has to say, for the Anglican conscience. How came it to such conclusions? If I go into a modern cemetery, I find two mortuary chapels carefully and cunningly constructed in their isolation, lest mysterious virtue or mysterious contamination should pass from the one to the other. I find a separated plot of ground, imbued with some occult quality of consecration, carefully fenced off from unhallowed intrusion; carrying the spirit of exclusiveness beyond death itself, with, no doubt, a regret that a similar adjustment of the

"many mansions" of the Father's house is not possible. Can anything analogous to this be found in Puritan churches, ideas, or feelings? Should not this mendacious talk about Puritan intolerance also be shamed into silence?

But must it not be admitted that the Puritan was *fantastic in his religiousness*, in his worship, his demeanour, his speech, his dress?

So far as at any time he was so, let him be rebuked. All follies and mannerisms of religious life and habit are mischievous and incongruous. They are a fit subject for ridicule or satire, if by such they can be most effectively corrected. But let the accusation be measured and the process of judgment just; and especially let the accuser in such a matter have a clean record. "What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander." Which, then, is the more fantastic, a Quaker bonnet or the cerements of a sister of mercy; a Geneva preaching-gown or the altar vestments of an Anglican priest; a black coat and white neck-tie, or the long tunic, the M.B. waist-coat, the mysterious nondescript that does duty for a cravat, of an Anglican's ordinary dress? Which is the most offensive in the spiritual worship of the spiritual God—where every obtrusion of our little selves and of prescribed antiés is almost a sacrilege—the straight-cut hair, the long-faced seriousness, even the nasal twang of the typical Puritan, or the tonsured head, the gaudy haberdashery, the ostentatious genuflexions, the ritual complexity, the theatrical attitudes—even to the adjustment of fingers and thumb in pronouncing a benediction—and the artificial intoning of the actual Anglican? Altar-lights and draperies, too; superstitions about the Real Presence, about wafer-bread—to which even a sensible man like Archbishop Tait had to succumb—about the consecration of the wine, so that if a single drop be spilled the

priest has been known reverently to lick it off the floor; incense, crossings, turnings to the east, and the thousand material and mechanical fantasies of an Anglican service.

With a single atom of self-consciousness the Anglican disposed to reproach Puritan worship with being fantastical would feel more difficulty in suppressing self-ridicule than the old Roman augurs did.

But it will be admitted that the Puritan is *ascetic*, that he mortifies natural human feeling, crucifies harmless amenities of life, denudes life of its natural and legitimate pleasures, makes it a mortification of God's gifts rather than a joyful use of them. Let there be full acknowledgment. Later Puritanism fell into this excess. I have said something in explanation and extenuation of it. It is a reproach common, more or less, to all earnest religions. Few things are practically more difficult than to present a just medium in the uses of life, and especially in its great struggles. Only a high and intelligent spirituality can rule it.

But I want to suggest here the comparison between the accused and their accusers.

Is not the Puritan, with every exaggeration of his ascetic extravagances, far more normal and rational than the Anglican? It is not he who creates legendary saints' days, and the fanciful seasons of the so-called Christian year, who painfully observes fasts, mortifies himself in Lent, eschews meat on Fridays, enjoins auricular confession, artificial penances, ridiculous pilgrimages, numerous Paternosters, and realistic crucifixes. If there be reason in either, surely the balance of reason is with the Puritan, and of asceticism with the Anglican. The Puritan, when you make the worst of him, simply guards against abuse by unnecessary disuse. The Anglican creates an artificial machinery of religious habit. By capricious rubrical injunctions and intermissions, by artificial alternations, if not

compounds of severity and laxity, self-mortification and perilous indulgence, morning celebrations and evening dissipations, a rubric of hours, a mechanism of services, an outward prescription of arbitrary mortifications, he confounds moral reason and neutralizes its force.

It is a curious problem, why the comparatively venial asceticism of the Puritan should be so resented, while the elaborate and vulgar asceticism of sacerdotal churches should be so tolerated. Is the reason to be found in the spiritual inspiration and thoroughness of the one, demanding the attitude and temper of the inward spirit, and in the mere mechanical religiousness of the other? Fully conceding that all asceticism is as injurious as it is unnatural and foolish, surely there is in every way less of extravagance, and more rational purpose in that of the Puritan than in that of the Anglican. At any rate he must be either a very audacious man or a very deluded one who from an Anglican platform ventures to cast a stone at the Puritan for his asceticism.

Thus much I have said in general exposition of the position of the Puritans, and in vindication of their contention and character. It will furnish us with a necessary key for understanding the speciality of the conflict in Laud's time, and will enable us to dispense with more than a rapid reference to its incidents.

III.

William Laud was born in Reading in 1573. He was the son of a respectable clothier, his mother being sister to Sir William Webb, afterwards (in 1591) Lord Mayor of London. Laud was therefore scarcely amenable to the reproach which, after the scurrilous fashion of their day, Prynne and some of his Puritan contemporaries so bitterly or contemptuously urged against him, viz., "that he was born of poor and obscure parents in a cottage." Nor can

the story told in the *Scot's Scout's Discoveries* (1639) be true, that "A courtier one day chanced to speak of his being born between the stocks and the stage. Whereupon his Grace removed from thence and pulled down his father's thatched house, and built a fair one in its place." The only ground for the story apparently being that he built and endowed an almshouse in that place. Laud, however, was characteristically sensitive to this reproach, and permitted it to torment him a good deal. One day his biographer, Heylin, found him walking in his garden unusually agitated. The archbishop told him that his enemies represented him to have been "raked out of a dunghill," and showed him one of the virulent attacks made upon him. He remarked that "he had not the good fortune to be born a gentleman, but he thanked God that he had been born of honest parents, who lived in a plentiful condition, employed many poor people in their way, and left a good report behind them." Whereupon Heylin comforted him by "a story of Pope Sextus the Fifth, as stout a pope as ever wore the triple crown, but a poor man's son, who did use familiarly to say, in contempt of such libels as frequently were made against him, that he was *domo natus illustri*, because the sunbeams passing through the broken walls and ragged roof illustrated every corner of that homely cottage in which he was born." The reproach was therefore as false as it was ungenerous. The juster sentiment of our own day would deem this a reason for a greater praise; the lowlier a man's origin the more illustrious his rise.

Laud was a sickly child, and through life he was a valetudinarian, rarely enjoying perfect health, and often brought low by serious attacks of illness. Until he was sixteen years of age he was educated in the Reading Free School, the master of which was a severe disciplinarian. The boy distinguished himself so greatly that his school-

master "frequently said to him that he hoped he would remember Reading School when he became a great man."

Readers of Laud's Diary will remember how great and credulous a dreamer he was, and how gravely he records his fantastic dreams. They constitute one of the odd superstitions which run like a thread through the texture of his character, and give to it strange features of grotesqueness. His dreams began early, and, Joseph-like, they precluded great fortunes. He gravely told them to his master. Perhaps the dreams of a man are the truest indications of his character, for in them he involuntarily embodies his truest self.

From Reading, at the age of sixteen, Laud went to St. John's College, Oxford. His tutor was John Buckeridge, a fellow of the college, a redoubtable controversialist, who vigorously assailed Romanism on the one side and Puritanism on the other. The controversy about kneeling at the Lord's Supper had just begun, the Protestant practice hitherto having been to receive it sitting. Buckeridge was a strenuous advocate of kneeling. He became Bishop of Rochester, and subsequently, through Laud's influence, Bishop of Ely. He was, says Antony à Wood, "esteemed by all who knew him; being little in stature, a very forward, confident, and zealous person."

Oxford at the time of Laud's entrance was thoroughly Calvinistic and Puritan. Dr. Laurence Humphrey, Regius Professor of Divinity, was a disciple of Zwinglius, and had been a correspondent of Calvin. Magdalen College, of which he was the principal, "was stocked with a generation of Nonconformists." Walsingham, Secretary of State, himself a zealous Puritan, had recently established the Lady Margaret Professorship, and had appointed to it the famous and learned Puritan divine Dr. John Reynolds. Indeed, Puritanism at Oxford was not only predominant, it was almost entire. The Anglican school had scarcely a

recognized existence, although germs of it were there, as Buckeridge's contention for kneeling at the Lord's Table showed, and these Laud was destined very signally to develop.

When he had been about a year at Oxford he was selected for a scholarship connected with Reading School. Four years afterwards he was admitted a Fellow of St. John's. Two years after that he was ordained by the Bishop of Rochester—the see of Oxford at that time being vacant. Ten years later he became president of his college, and subsequently was appointed, first vice-chancellor, then chancellor, of the university.

Laud was an Anglican when he entered Oxford, but for a long time he had to fight his battle unaided. His whole course at the university was one of steady purpose, courageous determination, and unresting controversy. His ability, zeal, and fearlessness soon made him a marked man. He began by repudiating the Puritan line of theological studies prevalent in the university, and struck out for himself a course sufficiently indicated by the remarks of the Bishop of Rochester at his ordination; who said that “he found his study raised above the system and opinion of his age, upon the noble foundation of the fathers, councils, and the ecclesiastical historians; and presaged that if he lived he would be an instrument of restoring the Church from the narrow and private principles of modern times.”

In an early academical exercise Laud assailed the Puritan conception of the Church as being without definite and continuous visibility, and as resting, not upon a succession of continuous organization and ministers, but upon a succession of true doctrines from time to time affirmed—as by the Berengarians, the Albigenses, the Wickliffites, the Hussites, and the followers of Calvin. In opposition to this Laud maintained the constant visibility

and apostolic succession of the true Church; that, so far from the English Church coming into existence only at the Reformation—one of a sporadic group of true churches—the Reformation was merely an incident in its unbroken history, which stretched back to the apostles.

The master of University College at that time was Dr. Abbott, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury. He was the recognized leader of the Oxford Puritans. He strongly protested against Laud's theory, and a sharp controversy followed. And thus probably began that instinctive and uncompromising antagonism between the two men which had such an important influence upon after events, sometimes breaking out into violent expression, and which continued until Abbott's death.

Laud's modern eulogists, Dean Hook, Canon Mozley, and others, construe this as a mean jealousy on the part of Abbott upon instinctively recognizing a formidable rival, and as a resentment of the impertinence of a mere Master of Arts presuming to think differently from himself. There is not the slightest evidence to sustain such an insinuation, and it is unworthy of those who make it: evil motive should never be imputed where good motive can be reasonably assumed. A more natural, and a sufficient, cause for Abbott's repudiation of Laud's thesis, and for the life-long antagonism of the two men, is the vital importance of the conflicting theories. Laud and Abbott became representatives of the two schools of opinion that thus engaged in the most vital struggle since the Reformation. And what we subsequently learn of the controversial spirit and methods of Laud compels us to judge that neither in equivocal methods of controversy, in unscrupulous imputations, nor in implacable resentment would he be surpassed by his antagonist.

Shortly after this Laud had to prepare an exercise for his degree of Bachelor of Divinity. In this he contended

for the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, and for the necessity of diocesan bishops to constitute a true church. This brought down upon him the collective censure and repudiation of several heads of houses. The president of Magdalen College, Dr. Holland, openly denounced him in the schools as "a seditious person who would re-embark the Reformed Protestant churches beyond the seas, and now sow division between us and them, who were brethren, by this novel popish proposition." This matter was one of the accusations against Laud at his trial. He was accused of having taken his doctrine of baptism from Bellarmine—an accusation which he denied. Laud tells of the persecution he endured at this time, so that it was even a scandal to be seen in his company.

A sermon preached at St. Mary's brought upon him the reprobation of Dr. Airay, the vice-chancellor, who charged him with Popery, and cited him to answer the charge in his court. The trial was protracted, and produced a great excitement, so that the Chancellor had to interfere. The details have not come down to us, but somehow or other Laud escaped.

Thus Laud came to be noted, not only for his Anglicanism, but for a certain subtlety and ambiguity as a controversialist; so that all parties regarded him with suspicion. Even good Bishop Hall, then at Cambridge, one of Laud's own school, was sorely puzzled about him, and wrote to him thus :

"I would I knew where to find you ; then would I tell you how to take direct aims, whereas now I must pore and conjecture. To-day you are in the tents of Romanists, to-morrow in ours, the next day between both, against both. Our adversaries think you ours, we theirs. Your conscience finds you with both and neither ; I flatter you not. This of yours is the worst of all tempers. How long will you halt in this indifferency ? Resolve one day, and know at last what you do hold and what you do not. Cast off either your wings or your teeth, and, loathing this bat-like nature, be either a bird or a

beast. To die wavering or uncertain, yourself will grant fearful. If you must settle, when begin you? If you must begin, why not now? God crieth with Jehu, 'Who is on my side, who?' Look out at your window to Him, and in a resolute courage cast down the Jezebel that hath bewitched you."

A few years later another sermon renewed the controversy. On a Shrove-Tuesday Laud delivered a philippic against Puritan doctrines. Dr. Abbott, brother to the archbishop, was at that time vice-chancellor. He was so exasperated that from the university pulpit at St. Peter's he poured out upon Laud a perfect torrent of theological and personal invective:

"Might not Christ say, 'What art thou? Romish or English, Papist or Protestant?' Or, 'What art thou? A mongrel composed of both; a Protestant by ordination; a Papist in point of free-will, inherent righteousness, and the like; a Protestant in receiving the sacrament; a Papist in the doctrine of the sacrament? What! do you think there are two heavens? If there be, get you to the other, and place yourself there, for unto this where I am ye shall not come.'"

"I was fain" (says Laud to Bishop Neile) "to sit patiently and hear myself abused almost an hour together, being pointed at as I sat."

In 1603 Laud was appointed chaplain to the Earl of Devonshire. This involved him in a terrible scandal and reproach. Lady Penelope Devereaux, daughter of the Earl of Essex, had been married to Lord Rich, who had obtained a divorce against her for adultery with the Earl of Devonshire. Laud, as chaplain to the Earl, celebrated the marriage between the seducer and the divorced adulteress. Even against ordinary morals this was a grave offence; but for Laud, the typical High Churchman, by whom marriage is held to be a kind of sacrament, it was in addition a flagrant ecclesiastical scandal, and brought upon him much obloquy and reproach. In his Diary he mourns and moans over his weakness in unmeasured terms of self-reproach; and one might be glad to think that it

was an exceptional error into which the best may fall, were it not that the same moral laxity in his after relations with Buckingham, and with great men generally, almost compels us to think that there was in his regret more of vexation for the ritual blunder than of moral compunction for the sin.

Successive preferments fell upon Laud with almost unprecedented rapidity. In November, 1607, he was presented to the vicarage of Stamford, in Northamptonshire; in April, 1608, to that of North Kilworth, in Essex, which in October, 1609, he exchanged for that of West Tilbury, in Essex; in May, 1610, the Bishop of Rochester presented him to the living of Cuckstone, in Kent; whereupon he resigned his fellowship in St. John's and left Oxford. In November, 1610, after an attack of Kentish ague, he was inducted by proxy into the living of Norbury. At this time Dr. Buckeridge, president of St. John's, was made Bishop of Rochester, and Laud was nominated by his friends as his successor. Abbott, then Archbishop of Canterbury elect, put forth the most strenuous efforts to prevent his election. At his instance, Lord Ellesmere, Chancellor of the University, urged the King to put his veto upon the appointment; but Bishop Neile, Laud's firm friend, pleaded his cause so effectively that the appointment was confirmed. A further appeal led to Laud's pleading his own cause before the King; who not only decided in his favour, but in November of the same year appointed him one of the King's chaplains. So far from the presidency of his college being regarded by Laud—as it generally is regarded—as a quiet haven in which the ship of his fortunes might henceforth lie up in ordinary, it was the real starting-point of his unresting and turbulent politico-ecclesiastical career.

I may by anticipation complete here the list of his preferments. In April, 1614, Dr. Neile, Bishop of Lin-

coln, gave him a Prebend in Lincoln Cathedral; in December, 1615, he appointed him Archdeacon of Huntingdon; in November, 1616, the King appointed him Dean of Gloucester, when he resigned his living of West Tilbury; in 1620 he was installed Prebend of Westminster; in June, 1621, he was made Bishop of St. David's, whereupon he resigned the Presidentship of St. John's; in 1622 the King presented him to the Rectory of Rudbackston, and permitted him to hold *in commendam* the stall of Lambister, in the collegiate church of Brecon, together with the stall of Westminster and the Rectory of Ibstock. In January, 1622, the King gave him the living of Creeke, to be held *in commendam*; in 1625, on the accession of Charles, he was appointed Deputy Clerk of the Closet. At Charles's coronation he acted in the place of Williams as Dean of Westminster; in June, 1626, he was translated to the see of Bath and Wells; in September of the same year he succeeded Bishop Andrewes as Dean of the Chapel Royal and adviser to the King; in July, 1628, he became Bishop of London; in April, 1630, he was chosen Chancellor of the University of Oxford; in September, 1633, he succeeded Dr. Abbott as Archbishop of Canterbury, and held that high office for twenty-two years; he having been also from the death of Buckingham, in August, 1628, virtually prime minister of the kingdom. "In some sort," says Fuller, "he had thus served all the offices of the Church, from a common soldier upwards."

Laud was an assiduous and faithful minister, his pluralities notwithstanding. Wherever he went he effected repairs and reformed abuses, and restored worship where it had been neglected; only, in his own characteristic way, of which we have an illustration in his proceedings at Gloucester in 1616, when he was appointed dean. With characteristic activity, fearlessness, and un-

wisdom, he set himself at once to revolutionize the services in the cathedral. He began with a revival of the old popish custom of obeisance on the part of the choristers and clergy on entering the cathedral. Then he proceeded to remove the communion table from the centre of the church, where it had stood, to the east end of the chancel. This naturally excited fierce opposition. Dr. Miles Smith, the Bishop of Gloucester, and one of the translators of King James's Bible, vowed that if the dean persisted he would never enter the cathedral again. He did of course persist, and the bishop kept his vow till the day of his death, eight years afterwards. Laud was denounced as a Papist, popular tumults followed, and the magistrates had to interfere.

My purpose is not, of course, to construct a biography of Laud, it is only to indicate such facts and characteristics as may suffice to make clear his mortal struggle with Puritanism.

The completion of Laud's career in Oxford, in 1610, affords an opportunity for indicating his general character and aims; and before mentioning the particular measures of his policy it may be well to form a general estimate of the man.

Few men have been more unequivocally, or more universally condemned by history. So unqualified and bitter is the condemnation, that it almost excites sympathy with him, and produces a feeling that, in the bitterness of party conflict he has been unduly vituperated, and that there must have been something good and noble in a man so able and successful, if not in the ultimate issue of his policy, yet in the arduous achievements of his course. I confess that it was with some feeling akin to this that I came to this particular study of his career. I remembered his fidelity as a parochial minister, his fearlessness as a reformer of abuses, his generous battle for the poorer clergy, his

intrepid defiance of the most powerful prelates in his church reforms, his marvellous successes at Oxford and advancement in the Church, his personal unselfishness, his munificent patronage of learning, and especially his notable interview with Hales and his quasi-sympathy with some of his liberal thinkings. I thought that there must be some nobler side of this singular man's character, which his absolutist theories in Church and State had obscured, and to which even the most candid had permitted dislike of his principles and methods to blind them. But after a very honest endeavour, I have been unable to discover it, and have been compelled to the conclusion that the severe verdict of history is just. No one can read the judgments of even his apologists—Heylin and Clarendon, Le Bas, Mozley, Hook, and others—without a painful feeling of their special pleading; they laboriously extenuate rather than simply vindicate; they are pleading for certain principles rather than for Laud, and are often, in their zeal for these, palpably unjust to their opponents. And when they have done all, they have even by their own admission done but little to qualify what must be the final verdict of history.

But first let us hear what they say.

Clarendon does the best he can for him, and for the cause which he served, but he is compelled seriously to qualify his praise, and to speak of him as discrediting his own exemplary virtues by "unpopular and natural infirmities, choleric, pedantic, irritating, impracticable, repulsive."*

Hallam, in his calm, judicial way, does not vituperate him, but presents a portrait of him which is terribly repulsive:—

"He was the evil genius of his unhappy sovereign. His talents though enabling him to acquire a large portion of ecclesiastical learn-

* Mozley, *Essay on Laud*, 207.

ing, seem to have been by no means considerable. There cannot be a more contemptible work than his Diary, and his letters to Strafford display some smartness, but no great capacity. No one can deny that he was a generous patron of letters, and as warm in friendship as in enmity. But he had placed before his eyes the aggrandizement, first of the church, and next of the royal prerogative, as his end and aim in every action. Though not literally destitute of religion, it was so subordinate to worldly interests, and so blended in his mind with the impure alloy of temporal pride, that he became an intolerant persecutor of the Puritan clergy, not from bigotry, which in its usual sense he never displayed, but systematic policy. And being subject, as his friends call it, to some infirmities of temper, that is choleric, vindictive, harsh, and even cruel to a great degree, he not only took a prominent share in the severities of the Star Chamber, but, as his correspondence shows, perpetually lamented that he was restrained from going further lengths.”*

Macaulay has a fiercer invective, unqualified by any good word.

“The mean forehead, the pinched nose, the piercing eye of the prelate suit admirably with his disposition. They mark him out as a lower kind of St. Dominic, differing from the fierce and gloomy enthusiast who founded the Inquisition, as we might imagine the familiar imp of a spiteful witch to differ from an archangel of darkness.”

Carlyle sums up his estimate of his character in a single epithet of pitiful contempt. He simply calls him “Little Dr. Laud.”

Guizot says, “Alike incapable of conciliating opposing interests, and of respecting rights, he rushed, with head down and eyes closed, at once against liberties and abuses.”

Professor Masson says, “To have hold of the surrounding sensations of men even by pain and irritation is a kind of power, and Laud had that power from the first.”

Canon Mozley’s defence of Laud is the most elaborate and able that has appeared, but it is full of most

* *Constitutional History of England*, vol. ii. p. 33.

damaging admissions. "Laud," he says, "had that particular framework of mind which domiciliates and harbours all hostile phenomena."

No one contemporary historian, with the dubious exception of Heylin, expresses admiration or approval.

Dr. Vaughan, with much shrewd discernment, suggests a close resemblance between Laud and Robespierre.

Mr. Perry, one of the most intelligent and candid of the historians of the English Church, says :

"There was in the all-powerful bishop no consideration whatever for the when, the where, and the how. No one can read his diary without being struck with the remarkable absence of common sense which it displays. The man who, amidst the great affairs of Church and State, in which he was bearing so all-important a part, can deliberately record his dreams—that he dreamt he had a tooth in his head so loose that it required some one to hold it in ; or that he had lost one sleeve of his rochet ; or that two robins flew into his study, can have nothing masculine in his character. He appears as a child throughout. That he was of a burning and disinterested zeal only brought into fuller relief, and made more dangerous, this strange impolicy and disregard of circumstance."*

And similar verdicts might be indefinitely multiplied.

Laud throughout his career indicates no growth, undergoes no change. A theological Minerva, he sprang fully developed from the brain of his Reading Jove. What he was in opinion at the end of his career that he was at its beginning. "I have ever," he said at his trial, "since I understood ought in divinity, kept one constant tenour in this my profession, without variation or shifting from one opinion to another for any worldly ends."

That in the midst of the prevalent Puritanism of his day, and of Oxford especially, this youth of nineteen should have begun his career with the fully-developed Anglicanism which he maintained fifty years afterwards is an almost unique phenomenon. "Laud," says Mr. Perry,

* *History of the Church of England*, vol. i. p. 445.

"was from the first accused of Romanism, and it is remarkable of him that his opinions never seem to have undergone the slightest change. Even his enemies confessed that he had ever held firm to them; that, beginning with them at Oxon, and so going to Canterbury, he was unmoved and unchanged." *

Now considering the laws of the human mind, the complex and changing conditions of human life, and the specially conflicting opinions of Laud's own times, we are almost compelled to say that the man who evinces no process in the formation of opinions, who knows no fluctuation, manifests no growth, learns nothing, and forgets nothing, indicates the characteristics of the bigot rather than those of the philosopher.

"Active, zealous, and earnest, thoroughly hating Calvinism and Puritanism, and little scrupulous as to the means he used to combat them, Laud soon began to be the leader of opposition in the university against the Abbots and their disciples, and under his influence Oxford gradually assumed the character the very opposite to that which marked it at the beginning of the reign of James." †

It is a striking testimony to his power that, under the leadership and nurturing of this stripling, this transformation should so rapidly have been wrought.

No one pretends to claim for Laud any of the qualities of genius, unless genius be rightly defined by Carlyle as unlimited power of hard work. With the power of steady, practical persistence Laud was pre-eminently endowed. Nothing that he did bears the stamp of individual creativeness. His remarkable successes were due, first to his definite purpose, next to his tenacity, which nothing could divert, and to his industry, which was unrelaxing. If the man of one book be formidable, so also is the man of one purpose. His sincere, unwavering, courageous purpose is one of his redeeming virtues; but it is the virtue of a

* Perry, i. 193.

† Ibid. i. 194.

Saul of Tarsus, who "verily thought with himself that he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth ; which things he also did in Jerusalem. He shut up many of the saints in prison, and when they were put to death he gave his vote against them." Sincerity saves a man from conscious villainy, but it is no excuse for bigotry and intolerance. Laud's personal unselfishness was also a distinct cause of his success. He was ambitious, and, as the list of his appointments shows, he lost no opportunity of acquiring wealth and power ; but his ambitions and strivings and plottings were for the Church much more than for himself. Of sagacity he had but little, of cunning a great deal. He failed in discernment of time and circumstance, and achieved by dint of sheer indiscriminating force. His power of administration as distinguished from statesmanship was great, the faculty of the market rather than that of the senate. He was a tactician, not a philosopher ; a schemer, not a statesman. His measures as a rule were ill-devised, untimely in application, and pursued with a blind persistency. His notions were fixed, stubborn even, but he was not much troubled with principles. His dogged obstinacy took no count of circumstances, and he was not scrupulous about methods. His course was a steeplechase, that surmounted all obstacles indiscriminately, without troubling himself about their intrinsic character. He had a single purpose, and his course to the realization of it was direct, and therefore narrow. There was no atmosphere of moral intelligence about him ; it was as a single ray shining through an aperture into a dark room ; he saw only the ray, intense but limited, and simply followed its course.

The one great purpose of his life was to rehabilitate the Church in her priestly character and Divine prerogatives, to vindicate the Anglican Church as a true branch of the episcopal and apostolic tree, and to invest it with preroga-

tives such as Rome exclusively claimed. The accusation that he sought to restore the Romish Church in England was probably untrue. He was always uncompromising in his antagonism to Rome, as his controversy with Fisher, the Jesuit, indicates; but he did seek to conform the Anglican Church to the pattern of Rome. He wished not to restore England to the Pope, but to establish an Anglican Pope at Lambeth. He took for his model the ante-Nicean Church, which he thought the parasitical errors and vice of Rome had corrupted and overlaid. He opposed the Reformation, not because it was a Reformation; for reformation he strenuously contended; but because he deemed it to have lost the apostolic notes of a church—the episcopal succession of its priesthood, the true doctrine of its sacraments. Hence he arrayed himself against all those Reformed churches of the continent, both Lutheran and Calvinistic, with which the English Reformers had avowed fraternity. In his judgment they were not churches at all. He sought, therefore, first to liberate the Anglican Church from all complicity with them, and next to transform its Puritanism. The direction of this was apparently, and, *pro tanto*, was actually, towards Rome. He always held Rome to be a true church, only corrupted. The Lutheran and Calvinistic churches, however excellent in religious character, were in his judgment no churches at all. Gladly would he have accepted reunion with the Church of Rome, if she could have been induced to forsake her errors and purge herself from her corruptions. Failing this he maintained Anglicanism to be a legitimate and purified branch of the episcopacy of Christendom.

With the Reformed churches, therefore, ecclesiastical union was impossible; they were not true churches at all. In the then state of England this was a difficult path for any man to keep. No wonder that Laud was mis-

understood by both Romanist and Puritan. No wonder that he failed to maintain his course even on its proposed lines. In the gusts of fierce passion and the fluctuation of events he was necessarily driven. Hence both Rome and the Puritans judged him to be seeking the restoration of England to Rome. That the Pope twice offered him a cardinal's hat is beyond doubt; it is equally true that, whatever his motives, he promptly declined it. He simply sought to restore to the English Church the apostolic validity, the sacramentarian doctrine, and the symbolical ritualism of which Puritanism was depriving her; and this was his great conflict with the Puritans.

James I. seems very shrewdly to have read the man. When Buckingham urged his appointment to the see of St. Davids, he said, "He hath a restless spirit, which cannot see when things are well, but loves to toss and change, and to bring matters to a pitch of reformation floating in his own brain. Take him with you, but by my soul you will repent it."

Laud was one of the last of the State-Churchmen so familiar to us in the middle ages. He was a political priest, statesman and ecclesiastic both, but in him priest was the noun substantive, politician the noun adjective; the latter was subordinated to the former; together they made what Mr. Matthew Arnold calls "a fractious mixture."

There was nothing large or high-minded in his administration. His subtlety was not of the penetrating but of the cunning kind. He ruled not by his grasp of the philosophy of human nature but by a calculation of its weaknesses, by expediences not by principles. When he became a bishop he employed spies to watch his clergy and report upon their proceedings; indeed, there is evidence that he himself had practised this sneaking meanness and

had reported his brother clergymen in high quarters.* He was a great stickler for the celibacy of the clergy, until he went so far as to excite distrust and alarm, when to allay it he made an ostentatious demonstration at the marriage of one of his own chaplains.

As is characteristic of such natures, he very oddly combined arrogance and humility, underhand management with public disavowal. He liked to accomplish his ends through the agency of others, to move a hand carefully hidden ; so that in things that he most wished done, and specially contrived to have done, he could innocently plead that he did not do them. In such things his humble disavowals were painfully emphatic. He was nothing; everything done was in deference to authority—either to the King, the law, the court of justice, or the council board, even when he himself was notoriously the impersonation of each. “Five several times,” says his able apologist Canon Mozley, “he goes down on his knees to the King to beg leniency for the Lord Keeper Williams; but his Majesty is resolute, inexorable to entreaty; the Lord Keeper goes to the wall. An internal distinction enables Laud to be first the vigorous persecutor and then the compassionate intercessor, and separates what his evidence does from what he himself does against Williams.” While exciting everything around him to agitation, he himself stands sublimely innocent: “Thou canst not say I did it.”

Even the often-praised devoutness of Laud, as indicated in his curious Diary, fails to work conviction, to excite confidence. It is ostentatious in its humility, exaggerated in its language, arbitrary in its estimates. It overpasses the reasonable consciousness of a man. He doth “protest too much.” It is the language of a morbid ascetic or

* Masson's *Milton*, i. 314.

anchorite, scarcely possible as the natural expression of a crafty politician and practical man of the world such as Laud was. He puts the chief emphasis upon the circumstantial act; the intrinsically moral scarcely troubles him. He is in agonies of contrition for trivialities of ritual or conventional failing. The moral qualities of his motives and feelings, or of his relations with men like Buckingham, are never recognized. His utterances lack the weightiness, the grave consciousness, the half-reserved awe of a true sense of sin; they are too voluble, artificially intense, hysterical. There are no depths of the spirit. It is a brawling confession, a proud humility. The subtlety of the actor seems so inherent that his very utterances to God seem conscious of an auditory.

Like most men of this type, Laud was very sensitive and irritable. While he was imperious, impatient, ungracious, unsociable, he could not bear the gazing of a crowd. He shrank from public observation as if he had something to conceal. His cuticle was thin and easily irritated. Every reproach or jeer wounded him to the quick. He had none of the calm, lofty consciousness of right, and worth, and God, that makes a man strong and equable, if not indifferent, to the criticisms or clamours of a crowd. He had the reputation of being the most disagreeable man in the three kingdoms, he was absolutely incapable of affability. His only possible alternative to imperiousness was obsequiousness. His very integrity was made repulsive by its haughtiness and austerity. So utterly disdainful of the ways of men was he that he never tried to conciliate them. No wonder that such a man has been the simple detestation of all historians who love liberty, and do not deem religious purposes a justification of any means. That even his ecclesiastical advocacy should constrain High Churchmen to vindicate him or apologize for him, is only another mournful illustration of the truth that church-

organization is often more to men than the very righteousness for which all churches exist. The pearl is sacrificed for the sake of the casket.

One does, however, feel some difficulty in understanding how this narrow, unimaginative, irascible man should have become the ideal of the party to which he belongs; for of the æsthetic, imaginative, and poetic elements which enter so largely into the sentiment and cultus of Anglicanism he was altogether destitute. The contrast between Laud and such Anglicans as Bishop Hall and George Herbert is immense. His ritual was vulgar, sensuous, and mechanical. He was a theological *doctrinaire*, an ecclesiastical martinet. Hardly could the elaborate services on which he insisted have been any inspiration of the religious imagination; they were a mere rubrical regulation—a sign rather than a symbol—at the best an unreasoning asceticism in which sentiment had but little place. Hence their forms were often grotesque, and to thoughtful men repellent. His strenuous efforts for reform in church worship exhausted themselves in official precision, ceremonial exactness, ritual parade and stateliness. No appeal is made to the great inspiring heart of righteousness. He seems scarcely conscious of its place.

Lest this should be thought too severe a judgment, let me cite an account which Rushworth has preserved to us, of the consecration of the Church of St. Catherine Cree, in Leadenhall Street, in 1630, when he was Bishop of London.

“First there was a pause made before the closed western doors; then a voice exclaimed, ‘Open, open ye, the everlasting doors, that the King of Glory may come in!’ Then the bishop and some doctors and other principal men went in; and the bishop, falling down upon his knees with his eyes lifted up, and his arms spread abroad, uttered these words: ‘This place is holy, the ground is holy; in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost I pronounce it holy.’ Then he took up some of the dust, and threw it up into the air several times in going up towards the chancel.”

At the Eucharist we are told that—

“As he approached the communion table he made several lowly bowings; and coming up to the side of the table, where the bread and wine were covered, he bowed seven times; and then, after the reading of many prayers, he came near the bread and gently lifted up the corner of the napkin wherein the bread was laid; and when he beheld the bread, he laid it down again, flew back a step or two, bowed three several times toward it; then he drew near again, and opened the napkin and bowed as before. Then he laid his hand upon the cup, which was full of wine, with a cover upon it, which he let go again, went back, and bowed thrice towards it; then he came near again, and lifting up the cover of the cup, looked into it, and seeing the wine, he let fall the cover again, retired back, and bowed as before. Then he received the sacrament and gave it to some principal men; after which, many prayers being said, the solemnity of the consecration ended.”*

This is a specimen of what Laud conceived to be “the beauty of holiness;” but without any disparagement of what any reasonable man may deem forms of reverence, it must, I think, be judged a painful and revolting mixture of blasphemy with the antics of a mountebank. It is impossible to construe these grotesque exaggerations of ritual as the natural impulses of genuine reverential devotion, or to give their performer credit for any of the lofty inspirations and devout sentiments of men like George Herbert or John Keble. One can recognize only the calculated antics of the ecclesiastical performer.

And the feeling is unrelieved by anything in his history, save his bearing at his execution. Laud was an ecclesiastical precisian, a stern and relentless disciplinarian, after the manner of the Pharisees; not a hypocrite, but a shallow formalist. All his reforms were prompted by this spirit, and pursued after this manner. Law, simply as such, was the ideal of his service, and obedience to law his sum total of religious virtue. One cannot resist the conclusion that he maintained orthodoxy, not so much for truth's sake as

* Rushworth's Collections, ii. 77.

for authority's sake; and ritual, not for the sake of the inward worship which it expresses, but for the sake of outward conformity.

From this sketch of his character it is not difficult to understand the antagonism and the feeling of bitter hatred that he excited, nor how he should so perplex even his friends, as to embolden the King's jester to venture upon the famous grace, "All praise to the Lord, but little Laud to the devil."

Our reference to the special incidents of Laud's administration, which intensified the conflict between him and the Puritans to such relentless hostility, may be brief.

And first in order comes Laud's assault upon Puritanism in the attempt to enforce Episcopacy upon Scotland.

So far back as 1616, Laud, as King James's chaplain, accompanied him to Scotland. Afraid of the Puritan Presbyterians, and their preachers, whom before coming to England he had so highly praised, James resolved, previous to his visit, to have the Chapel Royal in Holyrood fitted up for public worship according to the rites of the Church of England.

Four years before, Archbishop Abbott had appointed titular bishops to Scottish sees, but hitherto they had had no jurisdiction, or revenue, or even formal consecration. They were really bishops *in partibus*. They had, however, been admitted to seats in the Scottish Parliament, although this was bitterly opposed and resented by the Presbyterians. Attempts to give them practical as well as titular jurisdiction had been made, but without success. James purposed to secure this. But the arrangements and ornaments of the restored chapel at Holyrood were so excessive, that the Scottish bishops themselves remonstrated at their imprudence. James ridiculed them for their squeamishness, and informed them that he had brought down some English divines to enlighten their minds. The

Presbyterian pulpits resounded with protests and invectives against Popery; and the King, as well as the English prelates, were obliged to listen to fierce denunciations of their church and its ceremonies. No progress could be made. "The Scots were Scots, and were resolved to go their own way." A General Assembly was called, but nothing could be done with it. The King was resisted at every point. He confessed that the Presbyterian spirit was too strong for him, and, deeply mortified, he was glad to get back to England.

What part in this first visit to Scotland Laud personally played does not appear; but although he was only chaplain, and three bishops accompanied the King, there is some reason to think that his was the hidden hand that moved much that was done by others. We may be certain that he was not an idle spectator. In his *History of his Troubles*, however, he denies that he laboured to introduce into Scotland any innovations in religion or government.

We know from his correspondence with Strafford how strenuously he laboured to establish Episcopacy in Ireland. And his entire history is a record of the endeavour to make it exclusive in England. It is difficult to believe, Laud being what he was, that he did not to the utmost of his power prosecute in Scotland the great end to which he had consecrated his life. Certain it is that from this time the project was never permitted to sleep.

Seventeen years afterwards Laud visited Scotland again, accompanying Charles I., who, eight years after his accession, determined that he would be crowned King in Edinburgh. Laud was now Bishop of London. Tentative attempts had been made during these years. Four years prior to Charles's visit the Scottish bishops had sent a Mr. Maxwell to explain to the King their difficulties in carrying out his wishes. Laud told them that their demur was useless, and that he was determined to have an exact con-

formity between England and Scotland, and that, therefore, the English Liturgy was to be used *verbatim et literatim*. Maxwell appealed from Laud to the King, setting forth the impossibility of conformity; but with Charles, Laud was an oracle, and his dictum was reaffirmed. Nothing, however, was done. And now occasion was to be taken of the King's visit for another attempt to introduce the English Liturgy, but the temper of the Scottish Parliament and people made it impracticable. The issue was a feeble and futile compromise, that two years' grace should be given, after which the Liturgy should be introduced, and its use made compulsory throughout Scotland. Accordingly every Scottish minister was enjoined to procure copies of it.

Scotland was destined to prove Laud's greatest failure, as it was Charles's greatest blunder, and a proximate cause of his ruin. The history is too long and complicated to recount in detail, although it enters vitally into both the ecclesiastical and political issues of the times.

In July, 1637, an attempt was made to introduce the service book into St. Giles's, Edinburgh, when the ludicrous incident of Jenny Geddes' stool is said to have occurred. When the Dean of Edinburgh in his surplice began to read the Liturgy, Janet Geddes, an old woman sitting in the church on a stool, was so exasperated that she launched it at the Dean's head, crying, "Villain, dost thou say mass at my lug?" A tumult arose; the Dean slipped out of his surplice and fled. The Bishop of Edinburgh, ascending the pulpit to allay the ferment, was assailed by a volley of sticks and stones, with cries of "A Pope!" "Antichrist!" "Pull him down!" &c., which compelled him quickly to retreat. Clearly the people were not yet prepared for the Liturgy; indeed, a bishop could not safely show himself in the streets.

This led to the renewal of the Solemn League and

Covenant. The Marquis of Hamilton was hastily sent into Scotland to suspend the use of the Liturgy, which he proposed on condition that the Covenant should be abandoned. But instead of this, and in spite of the protest of the Scotch bishops, it was confirmed by the General Assembly, and Episcopacy was formally abolished.

Charles declared war, and sent an army of 20,000 men ; but they durst not risk a battle, and were fain to accede to a treaty at Berwick, according to which the King made promises and the Scotch conceded nothing.

The Scottish Parliament confirmed the acts of the General Assembly, and the infatuated King resolved upon the renewal of the war. The Scotch seized Newcastle, and the royal army retreated to York. The impotent conclusion was that Commissioners should be appointed to settle the quarrel.

For Charles and for Laud this insane attempt was the beginning of the end. How vitally it affected the struggle between Charles and the Parliament is written in the history of England. These later attempts were avowedly Laud's work. One result of this visit to Scotland was that Archbishop Spottiswood was made Lord Chancellor of Scotland, and the Bishop of Ross a Privy Councillor ; for this was an avowed part of Laud's policy, to restore ecclesiastics to high places in the State. He records his immense satisfaction when Bishop Juxon was appointed Lord High Treasurer in England. "The Church," he says, "has been low three hundred years, but I hope it will flourish again in another hundred." The conjunction had been familiar enough in the political and military bishops of the middle ages, but since the Reformation it had fallen into desuetude. It was a form of alliance between Church and State that high spiritual feeling repudiated. Laud determined to recover this prerogative for the Church. It was part of his conception of the Church as the supreme

power in social life, the arbiter of the fate of nations, the disposer of the world's wealth and honours. This quasi-theocratic idea had taken singular possession of Laud's mind. The sacerdotal power of the Church was to be developed through her control of the political as well as of the social sphere. It was another of the vain ecclesiastical imaginations which haunted Laud's sacerdotal brain, stimulated illicit ambition, and led him to his fate.

In order to understand Laud's relations to Charles I., we must bear in mind that, unlike his father, Charles was a chaste, temperate, and even religious man—his ineradicable and hereditary vice of lying notwithstanding. In temperament he was grave and austere ; in manner he was cold, stiff, and ungracious. He embraced Laud's ecclesiastical system with thorough conviction, and set himself, with a scarcely inferior earnestness, to compel its adoption. His marriage with Henrietta of France and the private ecclesiastical establishment which she demanded—a Romish bishop as her almoner, and twenty-eight priests for the service of her chapel—were a great scandal to the Protestant feeling of the nation, and a double form of temptation to Charles himself. His chivalry was enlisted on behalf of his wife, whom he loved, while her religion exposed him to constant seducement on the weakest side of his religious nature.

On the accession of Charles, Laud, at the suggestion of Buckingham, drew up for his use a list of the chief ecclesiastics of the land. The letter P or O—Puritan or Orthodox—was affixed to each name. According to this list patronage was dispensed, and thus gradually the Church was filled with Anglicans.

When Laud arranged the service for Charles's coronation he revived an old prayer used at that of Henry IV.—so strong in its recognition of the King's prerogative that it was characterized by Collier as “extremely high for a

regale, and might serve very well for the consecration of a patriarch." The King was exhorted to give greater honour to the clergy than to any other, because they come "nearer to the altar."

Laud's grotesque friendship with Buckingham, the profligate favourite of Charles, caused great scandal. It is impossible to imagine any genuine sympathy between the cold, fanatical Churchman, and the gay, dissolute courtier; but Laud scrupled at no means, shrank from no association that served his purposes. We meet in his Diary with no self-reproaches for connivance at Buckingham's vices, for virtual approbation of his character, for fawning on the man whose profligacies were notorious. He was, he said, "on *all* accounts bound for ever to honour him." Grave moral offences were not a trouble to Laud's ritual conscience. The friendship was very intimate. Laud was Buckingham's most subservient tool. To complete the comedy, Laud was formally appointed Buckingham's confessor. We have to imagine a rapid transformation scene from a political council to a religious service, from unscrupulous intrigue to a penitent and full confession. Laud donning his surplice, and Buckingham on his knees before him. Can anything more comic be imagined? If the penitent was ingenuous, was the confessor faithful?

There was, however, a religious element even in Buckingham's character. His mother was a pious woman, and his religious incongruity was after all only the counterpart of the worldly incongruity in Laud. Curious entries about this relationship occur in Laud's Diary. How Buckingham is to be prepared to receive the sacrament. How on a Sunday night Laud talked with him about the supernatural world. How he visited him when he was sick, and took the opportunity of expounding to him the differences between Puritanism and the Church. All this, knowing as we do what Buckingham really was, seems very grotesque

and profane. It is, however, simply in harmony with the strange medley of Laud's Diary. Buckingham was necessary to Laud, and Laud did not hesitate at any adulation that might serve his purposes. He made himself useful to Buckingham, and is said to have written his speeches for him, especially his penitential and almost grovelling reply to the charges brought against him in Parliament, which only his death evaded. Thus was constituted one of the oddest alliances that history records.

Laud's alliance with Strafford was more congruous and creditable. The two men had much in common, and sought the same great ends of political and ecclesiastical absolutism. Their alliance was one of entire sympathy, and apparently of absolute confidence. Strafford in Ireland, and Laud in England, strenuously laboured together to establish the supremacy of the Crown and the authority of the Church. The history of their efforts to establish Episcopacy in Ireland cannot be told here. It is simply in harmony with what was attempted in England and Scotland, only it was more successful. Their motto was "Thorough," and they demurred to no means, lawful or unlawful, that gave promise of promoting their end. Their letters were frequent, confidential, and copious, and discuss all the public affairs of the day. They furnish our very best sources of information concerning the characters and methods of both men. Laud's Irish policy is very characteristic. Strafford was so to manage the Irish Convocation as that, if they could not be induced, they were to be coerced into the adoption of the English Articles and Canons. English theologians were sent to the University of Dublin to indoctrinate the ministers of the Irish Church with Laud's Anglicanism. The main struggle was with the Irish aristocracy. It was severe, but it was short. Laud, as Primate, claimed to be absolute dictator. The Archbishop of Dublin was simply a subordinate ecclesias-

tical officer, whose duty it was implicitly to execute the behests of his master : no exercise of private judgment was permitted him. Bishops, indeed, were only pieces on the great chess-board of Laud's ecclesiastical game. Sometimes, with a scarcely concealed contempt, always with a peremptory authority, he " says to one, Go, and he goeth ; to anther, Coome, and he cometh ; and to a third, Do this, and he doeth it." His steady aim was to coerce the entire religious life of the three kingdoms into an inflexible uniformity. If men would not consent they were to be compelled. One difference, however, was made, and it naturally exasperated the Protestants. Popish recusants were dealt with much more leniently than Puritan Nonconformists. Whenever it was possible they were connived at. Elizabeth had been sternly impartial in her coercion. Charles was ever devising means of exemption for the recusants, and means of greater severity for the Puritans.

Buckingham was assassinated by Felton at Portsmouth in August, 1628. Laud's translation to the see of London had taken place only a month before. He was engaged in the consecration of Mountain, Bishop of Chichester, at Croydon, when the news reached him. This was an epoch in Laud's history. It opened for him political place. He at once became Premier of the kingdom, and confidential adviser to the King. Henceforth, therefore, he was constitutionally responsible for the King's policy. It is scarcely necessary to say that he carried into politics the wily, cunning, dogged qualities that had characterized his ecclesiastical administration. Ostensibly he took his stand upon severe law ; save, indeed, when Charles chose to disregard it, in which he was always justified by Laud, whose courtly theory it was that the King was superior to all law—its authoritative source and authentication. He therefore held that all attempts at reformation from without were seditious and treasonable. James had declared it to

be treason to affirm that the King was subject to law, and Charles and Laud formally endorsed the assumption.

Of philosophical statesmanship Laud had not a vestige. His administration was, however, severely just and uncorrupt, and he was sincerely earnest in seeking to reform abuses and redress wrongs.

It now became clear how deliberately and formally he had set himself to establish absolutism in both Church and State; and that in both he was prepared to sacrifice whatever of institutional or personal freedom stood in the way of it. The civil struggle, therefore, between autocratical and constitutional principles became as clearly defined as the ecclesiastical struggle. It was Laud who had advised the rash dissolution of Parliament before Buckingham's death, to save him from the impeachment brought against him. When the King wanted money, it was by Laud's advice that, on the refusal of Parliamentary grants, he levied forced loans upon the people.

To facilitate these loans he had recourse to what came to be called "tuning the pulpits." In the name of the King he issued directions to the bishops that they should enforce upon their clergy the preaching up of the King's prerogative, and the religious obligation of complying with his demands. And for the most part they readily complied.

Thus a Dr. Sibthorpe, in an assize sermon, preached at Northampton in 1627, contended that the King could make laws and revoke them at his pleasure, impose taxes upon persons and imposts upon trade; and that even unjust taxes were to be submitted to as we submit to the chastisements of God's providence "as a scourge for our sins"; and if, said he, "princes command anything which subjects may not perform because it is against the laws of God, or of nature, or impossible, yet subjects are bound to undergo the punishment without either resisting, rail-

ing, or reviling; and so to yield a passive obedience where they cannot exhibit an active one."

Charles was so delighted with this exaltation that he directed Abbott, Archbishop of Canterbury, to license the sermon for publication. To Abbott's great honour he refused, for which he was sequestered from his authority, and Bishop Mountain licensed the sermon.

In another sermon, preached before the King by Dr. Wren one of the King's chaplains, he said: "If any man say, I fear God, and feareth not the king, he is a liar . . . there is not the least contempt of majesty, but is a spice of profanation, and any step to disloyalty is a high tribute to atheism. . . . Unless you be slaves and rebels you will fear God and the King alike."

Even this servile blasphemy was transcended by Dr. Mainwaring, Rector of St. Giles's, another of the King's chaplains, who, in two sermons preached before the King two or three months later, said:

"Among all powers that be ordained of God the regal is most high, strong, and large. Kings above all, inferior to none, to no man, to no multitude of men, to no angel, to no order of angels. Their power is not merely human, it is superhuman. It is a participation of God's own omnipotency, which He never did communicate to any multitudes of men, but only and immediately to His own vicegerents.

"His majesty is not bound to keep and observe the good laws and customs of this realm; and that his royal will and command in imposing laws, taxes, and other aids upon his people, without common consent in Parliament, doth so far bind the conscience of the subjects of this kingdom, that they cannot refuse the same without peril of eternal damnation."

These sermons were licensed for printing by Laud. This was the pitch to which the Laudian pulpits were tuned. This was the way in which the National Church then kept the national conscience. What can be thought of the sycophants who preached, or of the monarch who heard and rewarded such blatant blasphemy? for both Dr.

Wren and Dr. Mainwaring were made bishops in token of the King's approval.

It is some comfort to know that the Parliament summoned Mainwaring to its bar for his sermons, compelled him on his knees to retract their doctrine, fined him £1,000, sent him to prison, suspended him for three years, and disqualified him for holding any further preferment. It also censured Laud for "warranting it to the press."

When, however, a fortnight afterwards, Parliament was prorogued, Mainwaring was freely pardoned by the King. The living of Stamford Rivers was given him, to be held with St. Giles-in-the-Fields. Shortly after he was appointed Dean of Worcester, and in 1635 Bishop of St. David's.

Questions of religion and of civil polity were getting very much mixed together. Each succeeding Parliament was more predominantly and intensely Puritan, and insisted more vehemently upon the redress of religious grievances, especially upon the punishment of recusants, and the banishment of Jesuits. It strenuously opposed all tendencies of priestly or regal domination, and did not shrink from the discussion of the profoundest theological questions. Among the Puritan leaders in Parliament were Pym, Eliot, Hampden, and Cromwell.

Charles was very unhappy with his Parliaments. His first Parliament, in 1625, proved very refractory. It met in May. Its first act was to commit Mountain to prison. Charles forthwith released him, and promoted him to a royal chaplaincy. It refused unconditional subsidies, and was dissolved on the 12th of August on the question of tonnage and poundage.

The second Parliament of 1626 sat only four months. It fiercely denounced Arminianism and Popery, as well as illegal taxation. It took proceedings against Buckingham, by voting his impeachment and sending it to the Lords. He was saved only by the King's sudden dissolution of it;

and in saving Buckingham, Laud was saved. The proclamation dissolving it declared the outcry against Arminianism and Popery to be frivolous, and charged the people to refrain from controversy on such matters. Then for a year and a half Charles tried to govern without a Parliament. This was the period of forced loans and "tuning the pulpits."

But in March, 1628, Charles was compelled to summon his third Parliament. It was prorogued in June. Next to the Long Parliament it was the boldest and most Puritan of Charles's Parliaments. Theological matters were again debated. Arminianism and Popery were denounced more vehemently than ever; and when the King disregarded their Petition of Right, and the Speaker, in the name of the King, sought to silence the members, there was such a passion of tears, and protest, and stern determination as has rarely been witnessed in the British Parliament. The Grand Remonstrance was drawn up; also a full statement of national grievances, and an intimation that not only Buckingham, but Laud and Bishop Neile were men who would have to be dealt with. At the end of June the Parliament was prorogued; and two months afterwards Buckingham was assassinated, when Laud became the absolute minister, holding Charles in his grasp and inspiring all his policy. Prior to the reassembling of Parliament in January, 1629, Laud and Bishop Neile prepared a manifesto, ordered by the King to be prefixed to a reprint of the Thirty-nine Articles, where it still may be found in the Book of Common Prayer, but without any indication of date or circumstance. Its proposals to restrain liberty of preaching, to prohibit discussion of doctrines, and to reserve the sole right of ecclesiastical legislation to the King and Parliament, put forth as they were as a kind of ultimatum, exasperated public feeling to a very high degree. The Parliament met,

therefore, in a very ominous temper. Instead of letting religion alone, as they were required to do, it was the first business introduced. The Declaration was made their first grievance. "There is a ceremony," said Eliot, "used in the Eastern Churches, of standing at the repetition of the creed, to testify their purpose to maintain it, not only with their bodies upright, but with their swords drawn—give me leave to call that a custom very commendable." To this challenge the Commons responded by a formal avowal of their faith and purpose. They claimed jurisdiction over all national affairs in Church as well as State.

The Puritan leaders went beyond themselves in direct and eloquent denunciation and menace. Cromwell made his maiden speech. Selden learnedly contended for the liberty of the press against the secret and arbitrary decrees of the Star Chamber. The King, in defiance of the Petition of Right, had again arbitrarily levied customs. The Commons refused tonnage and poundage until the wrong done by their illegal levy was redressed, and summoned the farmers of the customs to their bar for their illegal proceedings. The Speaker interposed, intimating that he had received the King's order to adjourn. Then the long-suppressed indignation of the House broke out. Eliot nobly vindicated the rights of Parliament and the liberties of Englishmen. "None," said he, "have gone about to break Parliaments, but in the end Parliaments have broken them." A resolution of censure against Bishop Neile and Bishop Juxon, the Lord Treasurer, was proposed. The Speaker refused to put it; whereupon the doors were locked, and he was forcibly held in his chair until a declaration was prepared consisting of three resolutions. The one concerning religion declares that "whosoever shall bring in innovation of religion, or by favour or countenance seem to extend Popery or Arminianism, or other opinion disagreeing from the true and orthodox Church, shall be

reputed a capital enemy to this kingdom and common-wealth."

The other resolutions related to tonnage and poundage, and declared every one who paid such, "not being granted by Parliament, a betrayer of the liberties of England, and an enemy of the same." These were the last parliamentary words spoken in England for eleven years, for the King ignominiously dismissed this intractable Parliament in March, and resolved henceforth to govern without Parliaments. A royal proclamation was issued forbidding a new Parliament to be even spoken of. For eleven years Charles governed England on the arbitrary principles that Parliament had denounced, and Laud as his prime counsellor was supreme.

Four years after the dissolution—that is, in 1633—Abbott, Archbishop of Canterbury, died; and Laud, on going to the King, was at once saluted, "My Lord of Canterbury, you are welcome;" so that he was now supreme in both Church and State. To his credit be it said that he set himself to reform abuses, to restore church buildings, to correct irregularities in the clergy, and improve their livings. Absolutely fearless and uncompromising, he made his authority felt by high and low alike. Corrupt bishops and unfaithful priests received no mercy at his hands. Had Laud been merely a reformer of abuses he would have merited very high praise. In his private deportment, as Burnet testifies, he was learned, sincere, zealous, regular, and humble. In his rule he was unselfish, although not gracious; for he was rough, irascible, indiscreet, an abject fawner on the King and on his despicable favourite Buckingham, given to puerile superstitions, mean, cringing, and unscrupulous in carrying out his purpose.

Laud openly avowed his purpose to trample out Puritanism. The struggle was on both sides recognized as a struggle to the death.

He declared it his purpose in the distribution of patronage to give the preference to unmarried priests. Auricular confession was enjoined, pictures and crucifixes were set up, gaudy vestments and elaborate ceremonial were made imperative ; and (which was the cause of the fiercest contention) the removal of the communion table from the centre of the church to the east end of the chancel, and its transformation into an altar, was enforced. "The altar," said Laud, "is the greatest place of God's residence upon earth ; greater than the pulpit, for there 'tis *Hoc est corpus meum*, 'This is My body ;' but in the pulpit it is at most *Hoc est verbum meum*, 'This is My word.'"

Altar questions are not questions of mere ceremonial. They are questions of vital doctrine. The communion table in the midst of the people was a distinct repudiation of the Eucharistic sacrifice. It was often, no doubt, irreverently treated. Thus we read, "Churchwardens kept their accounts upon it ; parishioners despatched parish business at it ; schoolmasters taught boys to write at it ; boys laid their hats, satchells, and books upon it ; men sat and leaned irreverently against it at sermon-time ; glaziers knocked it full of nails."

Laud might have demanded the rectification of such things without incurring reproach ; but he was bent upon transforming the table into an altar, which once recognized as such would be a test of all theology, and a sanction of all worship. Therefore he strictly enjoined that the table was to be placed close to the wall at the east end of the church, and to be separated by rails from the congregation, and that pews which obstructed the sight of it should be removed.

An order in Council had just ruled that the placing of the table was within the authority of the Ordinary. This gave Laud the vantage-ground he needed. He only had

to manage the bishops ; but it left to them the exercise of their own discretion. Thus Williams, Bishop of Lincoln—Laud's old antagonist—prepared for the archbishop's visitation by removing the table from the east end of the church, where it happened to stand, to the body of the church. A fierce controversy followed ; the question was felt to be vital ; and practical consequences of a very unpleasant character ensued.

For instance, the churchwardens of Beckington, in Somersetshire, refused to remove the communion table, as the Bishop of Bath and Wells had enjoined. Whereupon the bishop excommunicated them. They appealed to the Court of Arches, were imprisoned, and were not released until they submitted to the bishop, and did penance for their contumacy.

Bishop Williams published two pamphlets in opposition to Laud's injunctions. For one of them entitled, "*Holy Altar, Name and Thing*," he was indicted before the Star Chamber. Sentence was given against him ; he was suspended from all his preferments, fined so heavily that the sale of all his property was necessary to enable him to pay the fine, and imprisoned during the King's pleasure. He continued in the Tower for three years. When Laud had the chance of smiting he did not spare. He was nothing if he was not "thorough ;" but by these relentless and outrageous proceedings he incurred much-deserved obloquy.

Among the more incidental points of antagonism between Laud and the Puritans was the Lord's Day controversy.

So far back as 1616, when James was returning from Scotland, Laud as his chaplain being with him, he was in his progress through Lancashire offended by the Puritan strictness of Sabbath observance. This led to his issuing a proclamation concerning lawful recreations on the

Lord's Day, and, under the advice of Morton, Bishop of Chester, to the publication of the first *Book of Sports*, which specified them. They included manly exercises—May-games, Whitsun ales, and Morris dances; but the baiting of animals, interludes, and bowls were declared unlawful. And this regardless of the statute of Parliament, which had prohibited Sunday sports.

The King's injunctions produced a great excitement. They were everywhere resisted. Archbishop Abbott forbade the declaration to be read at Croydon, where he happened to be. Puritan clergymen generally refused to read it. Puritan judges, taking their stand upon the parliamentary statute, refused to enforce it, and declared such sports unlawful. So matters stood for sixteen or seventeen years. At length, in 1633, when Charles had been king eight years, and when Laud had just succeeded Abbott as Archbishop of Canterbury, Chief Baron Walter and Baron Durham being on circuit in the west, issued orders at the Devonshire assizes for the suppression of all "revels, church-ales, clerk-ales," &c., on the Sabbath. The *Book of Sports* had become a dead letter.

Chief Justice Richardson, fortified with the judges' orders, and supported by the Somersetshire grand jury, issued an injunction to the clergy of the county to publish this prohibition in their churches. This brought Laud down upon him, who summoned him to revoke his order, and I think with reason, as being "an encroachment upon the ecclesiastical jurisdiction, and imposing upon men in holy orders the publishing of warrants and commands from the secular power." A perfectly legitimate position—only Laud had forgotten his own "tuning of the pulpits," and was unmindful of the adage that "what is sauce for the goose, is sauce for the gander." The King commanded Richardson to rescind his order, instead of which, he reissued it on his next circuit in a more peremptory

form. He was cited to appear before the Council, and received from Laud such a rating that he was effectually silenced, and left the Council in tears, saying that he was "choked by a pair of lawn sleeves." *

Upon this the second *Book of Sports* was issued, and every clergyman was ordered to read from the pulpit the King's declaration in favour of Sunday pastimes. One Puritan minister obeyed the mandate, but closed the reading with the remark, "You have heard read, good people, both the commandment of God and the commandment of man. Obey which you please." Generally the clergy refused obedience. Those who did so were cited before the High Commission, and either silenced or deprived of their livings. Thirty parochial clergymen were deprived in the diocese of Norwich alone.† This intrusion upon the practical religious life of the people affected them more than innovations in doctrine and worship did. It greatly intensified the resistance and hatred of the Puritans to Laud, who was chiefly credited with it.

Another daring stroke of Laud's absolutism was his prosecution and cruel punishment of men who dared in print to controvert his theories. In 1630 Dr. Leighton, a Scottish Doctor of Divinity and Medicine, and the father of Archbishop Leighton, wrote a pamphlet against bishops, entitled *Pious Plea against Prelacy*, which was plain-spoken and scurrilous enough. For example, he branded the Queen as an idolatress. He was cited before the Star Chamber in June, 1630. His sentence, executed in the following November, was—a severe whipping before being set in the pillory. There to have one of his ears cut off, one side of his nose slit, and to be branded in the cheek with a red-hot iron with the letters S.S.—stirrer-up of sedition. Then to be taken back to the Fleet, and a week later to be

* Perry, i. 464.

† Green, iii. 161.

again whipped and set in the pillory in Cheapside, to have his other ear cut off, the other side of his nose slit, and his other cheek branded; and then to be kept in prison, where he actually remained ten years. Laud's Diary—so profuse in exaggerated acknowledgments of ritual offences—simply says concerning the atrocious cruelty, "Part of his" (Dr. Leighton's) "sentence was executed on him." But the greatest excitement was caused by the prosecution and punishment of the three noted Puritans, Prynne, Burton, and Bastwick, for similar offences. Prynne's *Histriomastix* was an attack upon the stage and its supporters, which was construed into a reflection upon the Queen, who was a great patron of the stage. Mr. Burton was a clergyman, who in two sermons attacked Laud and the bishops as innovators in the Church. Dr. Bastwick was a physician, who published in Latin a treatise entitled *Flagellum Episcoporum Latialium*, and a Litany in English attacking the dignitaries of the Church.

Prynne's *Histriomastix* was published in 1633. He was sentenced to the pillory, his ears were cut off. He was branded on the cheek, fined £5,000, and to be imprisoned for life: a sentence horrible in its cruelty and iniquity. The spirit of the Puritan lawyer was not cowed by it. From his prison he from time to time issued publications more bitter and unmeasured still. He replied to a book of Heylin's entitled *A Coal from the Altar*, by another entitled *Quench-coal*. Another book was entitled *The Unbishoping of Timothy and Titus*; and a third, giving a vivid account of Bishop Wren's doings, was entitled *News from Ipswich*. In 1637 the three men were brought before the Star Chamber. They were fined £5,000 each to the King, sentenced to stand in the pillory, to lose their ears, to have their books publicly burnt, and to be imprisoned for their lives. Prynne was further to be branded on the cheek with the letters S. L. (seditious libeller); and as he

had already lost his ears, he was now to lose the stumps that remained, "rather sawn off," says the chronicler, "than cut." This he bore so heroically that the people hailed him as William the Conqueror.*

Laud took occasion at the trial to make a long speech in vindication of his ecclesiastical administration—a curious study for its low cunning and arrant cowardice, for, under plea of the law, he contrives to throw the entire blame of his innovations upon the King. John Lilburne also, the printer of one of Prynne's tracts, was whipped through the streets and placed in the pillory, then thrown into the most wretched dungeon in the Fleet, with double irons on his hands and feet so that he could not move; and it was ordered "that he should not be supplied with any hand"—an atrocious hint that he was to be starved to death. He did, however, contrive to get supplies, and with the other libellers remained in prison until the assembling of the Long Parliament, one of the first acts of which was to release these men, who were brought by the people into the city in triumph. Parliament also voted the compensation of a large sum of money to the sufferers, which, with exquisite irony, they ordered Laud, as one of the High Commissioners, to pay.

These atrocities of lawless power more, perhaps, than any other incident during these melancholy years of absolute rule, gave definiteness and intensity to the secret determination, not of the Puritans only, but of every patriot, sternly to bring Laud to account.

Another act of unscrupulous power which greatly excited public indignation was Laud's treatment of foreign Protestants settled in England. In the time of Elizabeth a number of persecuted Dutch and French Protestants had

* Rushworth, ii. 392.

fled as refugees to England. Freedom of religious worship was guaranteed to them first by Elizabeth, afterwards by James. Now Laud thought it was time that they should conform. It was not, he told them, "the meaning of the State then, or at any other time since, that the first generation being worn out, their children and children's children, being naturally born subjects of this realm, should still remain divided from the rest of the Church." He therefore advised the King that if they would not conform, they should be taxed doubly, treated as aliens, and excommunicated. Accordingly they were persecuted into conformity in every way of ingenuity. Nothing was too mean or treacherous for this man's ecclesiastical conscience. Men who had trusted to English liberty and honour found themselves persecuted as relentlessly as their fathers had been in the countries whence they fled. "The Walloons," he says, in the report of his province in 1637, "and other strangers in my diocese do come orderly to their parish churches, and there receive the sacraments and marry according to my injunctions." What wonder that the "little red-faced man," as Sir S. D'Ewes calls him, should have been regarded by the high-spirited laity of England with an utter detestation. No wonder that three years after this his palace at Lambeth was attacked by a mob and he saved himself only by flight.

Another injustice was the arrest and punishment of separatists. In 1632, at Blackfriars, in the same year at Newington, in Surrey—everywhere, indeed, they were hunted out and brought before the High Commission. Thus Laud, in a letter to Windebank says: "We took another conventicle of separatists in Newington Woods upon Sunday last, in the very brake where the King's stags should have been lodged for his hunting the next morning." Next day they were tried by the Court of High Commission; and an account of their examination has

been printed from the Rawlinson MSS. by Dr. Waddington.*

A proclamation against unlawful assemblies for worship was issued in 1634. Justices of the peace, mayors, bailiffs, constables, and all His Majesty's officers, are to do their best to apprehend the worshippers and seize their books. Of course the persecution produced the usual effects: "the number of the disciples was multiplied," as we gather from the testimony of Dr. Francis Cheynell, of Merton College, Oxford, who describes the course of Laud's Anglican aggressions and of the growth of Nonconformity.†

Another stroke of Laud's policy was the suppression of the lectures in parish churches. One of the popular institutions of the Puritans was The Lecture, founded in large towns and elsewhere as a service additional to the ordinary services of the parish church. These Lectures were commonly preached by clergymen who held no cure of souls, and who were not, therefore, bound to subscribe or conform. They were supported by the laity, and were almost all of them Puritan in character. They became centres of Puritanism not only in towns, but in large country districts.

In the King's Injunctions, drawn up by Laud and issued in 1629, the lectures were aimed at. He began by seeking to regulate them:—"that where a lecture is set up in a market town, it be read by a company of grave and orthodox divines near adjoining, and in the same diocese; and that they preach in gowns, and not in cloaks, as too many do." Abbott opposed these limitations, "for to the lecturers," says Heylin, "as the chief sticklers in the Puritan cause, he was always favourable." Several of the lecturers were put down, and "wandering preachers were made to run" out of the diocese of Norwich, where

* *Congregationalism*, vol. ii, p. 275.

† *Ibid.*

lectures were very numerous. Bishop Wren reports Ipswich to be "the head-quarters of Nonconformity in England." The people, however, in spite of Laud and the bishop, maintained their afternoon lectures in the parish church; but Laud waged against them an unintermitting war. It was characteristic of the Long Parliament that, by special enactments, they encouraged the appointment of lectures, and, as Walker tells us, established them in many places. The lectures were a great cause of contention and tumult in that excited time, and some of the greatest of the Nonconformist preachers were amongst the lecturers. Their violent suppression by Laud, and another measure related to it, viz., the prohibition of private chaplains to country gentlemen, and indeed to all commoners, which had become common amongst the Puritan gentry, excited an intense feeling of resentment.

Through these and similar measures the Puritan clergy were harried out of their benefices, which were filled with Anglicans, and the Puritan laity were deprived of religious ministrations. Thus Laud blindly rushed on to his fate, and prepared for the overthrow of the throne and the Church. "The clamour," says Bishop Hackett, "might have warned wisdom to stop. Policy ought to listen abroad to the talk of the streets and the market places, and not to despise rumours when they are sharpened against the innovating of any discipline." The country gentlemen being for the most part Puritan deserted their estates, and aggregated in London and Westminster, whereupon Laud caused a proclamation to be issued commanding them to return. In a single day two hundred of these absentees were cited to appear before the Council, accused not merely of absence from their estates, but of spending their substance in vain frivolities, instead of keeping hospitality and relieving the poor. Cottages were pulled down, arable land was turned into pasture land,

and depopulation set in as a rapid process under Laud's high hand.*

One important result of this tyranny must not be omitted, viz., the large and continuous Puritan emigration to the continent of Europe, and to North America, which it induced.

A plantation in New England was projected by Eliot, Hampden, and other Puritan leaders. There is a tradition that in 1638, Cromwell, Hampden, Pym, Sir Arthur Haselrig, and others, actually embarked on the Thames to sail for New England, and were hindered only by an embargo on the ships, eight vessels in all, issued by order of the Council. The story contains many inherent improbabilities, and is probably a pure imagination so far as these Puritan leaders are concerned. The Puritan emigration was, however, very large. In 1629—nine years, that is, after the sailing of the Pilgrim Fathers in the *Mayflower*—three ships, carrying Puritan emigrants, sailed from the Isle of Wight. In due time they arrived at Salem, Massachusetts, and founded the English settlement there. For more reasons than one, these Puritan settlers, and those who followed them in an almost continuous stream until the meeting of the Long Parliament in 1640, are to be carefully distinguished from the pilgrims who left Delft Haven, and who landed at Plymouth Rock from the *Mayflower*. First, they did not, as the pilgrims did, go out as separatists; their ecclesiastical principles were not those of Robert Brown or John Robinson. They were not Congregationalists. They were Episcopalians, driven out solely by practical grievances. Hence, when they came to the Land's End, Mr. Higginson called the passengers to the stern of the ship to take a solemn farewell to England.

"We will not say" (he remarked), "as the separatists were wont to say at their leaving of England, 'Farewell, Babylon! Farewell,

* Perry, i. 501.

Rome!' but we will say, 'Farewell, dear England; farewell, the Church of God in England, and all the Christian friends there!' We do not go to New England as separatists from the Church of England, though we cannot but separate from the corruptions in it; but we go to practise the positive part of Church reformation, and to propagate the gospel in America."

A number of separatists, however, amongst them Mr. Charles Smith, a separatist minister, on their way to join the Pilgrim Church at New Plymouth, were permitted to sail with them. But they were no part of the Salem company; indeed, Smith was permitted to go only upon his formally undertaking not to exercise his ministry within the limits of the new colony save by express permission of the governor.

Another fleet of four ships left the Isle of Wight in April, 1630, conveying John Winthrop, the new governor, and his companions. The question of separatist emigrants excited a controversy, and in 1630 John Wight, in his *Planter's Plea*, affirmed, "There is no one separatist known unto the governors, or if there be any it is far from their purpose, as it is from their safety, to continue him amongst them. . . . We do and ought to put a great difference between 'Separation and Nonconformity,'" referring to those who objected to certain ceremonies, whom he calls "semi-separatists." The Puritan emigrants are, therefore, to be ecclesiastically distinguished from the Leyden pilgrims. And the distinction becomes specially important in relation to the measures of intolerance and persecution into which the New England churches permitted themselves to lapse, and which so compromised their principles and sullied their fair fame. With much plausibility it has been contended that the pilgrims of New Plymouth, kept therefrom by their independent principles, took no part in the subsequent persecutions of Baptists and Quakers, and that the Salem Puritans and their descendants are solely responsible for them. The question is difficult to determine.

It is certain that the Pilgrims received the Puritan emigrants very fraternally, that the ecclesiastical views of the latter underwent a great change, so that after correspondence between Governor Endicott, of Salem, and Fuller, one of the deacons of the church at Plymouth, the Salem emigrants in July, 1629, organized themselves into a church very closely resembling the Independent model, and invited representatives of the Plymouth Church to be present at the ordination of their minister, Mr. Higginson. So that Congregationalism became the normal church order of New England.

How far in their after history the two streams of Plymouth and Salem, like the Rhone and the Arve at Geneva, flowed together without commingling, is too nice a point for me at any rate to determine.

Among the refugees were many men of note. John Eliot, afterwards apostle to the Indians, went from the little village of Nazing, in Essex; Mr. John Cotton, Fellow of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, and Vicar of Boston, was cited before the High Court of Commission, but contrived to escape to New England, where he became pastor of the settlement of a new and greater Boston, so named by him; Mr. Hooker, also a Fellow of Emmanuel College; Mr. Chauncy, Vicar of Ware, and many other clergymen.

Amongst those who found refuge in Holland were Jeremiah Burroughs, colleague of Calamy at Bury St. Edmunds, afterwards Rector of Titshall, in Norfolk, who, after being for awhile sheltered by the Earl of Warwick, had to flee for safety to the continent; William Bridge, Fellow of Emmanuel College; Dr. Thomas Goodwin, of Christ College, Cambridge, and Lecturer of Trinity Church; Philip Nye, of Oxford, &c. These and other Dutch exiles meditated in Holland the questions brought by Laud into such prominence in England. They all became uncompromising Nonconformists of the Commonwealth.

The Long Parliament, the most notable of English Parliaments, assembled on November 3, 1640. Under the leadership of Pym, the first and one of the greatest of parliamentary leaders, it nobly maintained the struggle of constitutional right, and of civil and religious liberty, against the strenuous absolutism of Charles and Laud.

Its simple assembling produced a great excitement ominous to both. It put a sudden arrest upon the emigration of the Puritans; an outburst of Puritan sermons and pamphlets gave expression to the public determination to put an end to the lawless tyranny of Charles's personal rule. It is said that within the next twenty years thirty thousand polemical pamphlets were published. Chiefly, however, the temper of public feeling was seen in the resolute bearing and the strong, fearless words of the five hundred men assembled at Westminster, and in the petitions from every part of the country which deluged the House. Forty committees had to be appointed to report upon the latter. It was at once resolved to deal sternly with the counsellors and agents of the royal system of rule; the Commons resolved to spare the name of the King himself, but at once to impeach his advisers.

Strafford—who perhaps was more bitterly hated than Laud, although his political character was a mystery not even yet penetrated—was first dealt with; Lord Digby characterizing him as “that grand apostate of the commonwealth who must not be expected to be pardoned in this world till he be despatched to the other.” Windebank, Secretary of State, was impeached, but saved himself by escaping to France; as also did Finch, the Lord Keeper. On the 18th of December, 1640, six weeks after the assembling of Parliament, Laud was accused by the House of Commons of high treason, and the impeachment was carried to the Lords by Denzil Holles. He was committed to the Tower, and remained there for three years before he

was brought to trial. A manifest wrong; but the great civil war had begun, and in the presence of war the laws are silent. Laud could do no harm. There was scarcely any question of his moral guiltiness, and he was contemptuously disregarded.

In November, 1643, his trial began; but it dragged on its slow length to October, 1644. It was not, indeed, easy to frame a legal indictment. The charge of high treason was preposterous. On a reference by the Lords to the judges, the latter declared that the charges did not sustain a charge of legal treason. To meet the case, therefore, the Commons passed a special bill of attainder, to which the Lords assented; and on January 6th the Lords found him guilty, and sentenced him to death by hanging. On his own petition the sentence was commuted to beheading; and so he was put to death on January 10th, 1645.

That Laud's sentence was an illegal one all jurists are agreed. Hallam designates it one of the greatest reproaches of the Long Parliament. But due allowance must be made for the exigencies of revolutionary times. It is often imperative that action shall be taken upon grounds of moral equity rather than of technical law. There are treasons against the commonwealth, as well as treasons against the monarch. And if through the undue exaltation of monarchical power, technical law guards only the monarch, then a movement of revolution is simply an uprising of national right against the injustice done to the commonwealth, and equity demands the punishment of those who, technically or not, have been traitorous to the latter.

That Laud's unscrupulous tyranny and unconstitutional administration merited exemplary punishment can scarcely be questioned. It had deprived the nation of just liberties; it had persecuted and banished and put to death unoffending citizens; it had invaded parliamentary rights;

and for eleven years had abolished Parliament itself. It had plunged the country into civil war, and by the most revolutionary of all forces, viz., undue assumption and conservatism, had overturned both the Church and the throne. It had compelled staunch monarchists like Cromwell to draw his sword against the King on behalf of liberties for the maintenance of which kings exist. Equitably, therefore, on every ground of moral desert and moral right, his execution was just.

But Laud was now an old man of seventy-four, and powerless to do further harm. He had been in prison four years, and, I think, without any prejudice to the cause of liberty, his life might have been spared.

His prison life has its touches of pathos, and in his defence on his trial with much of characteristic disingenuousness and unwisdom there is a certain personal dignity, as in his bearing throughout—that touch of softening which comes upon a man when so great an ambition is brought to so sad a tragedy. We cannot mistake either that root and base of genuine piety which, however marred and qualified, characterized him throughout life. Our feelings soften towards the old man as he pays the penalty of his great ambitions, and lays down his life on the scaffold. He deliberately sought to revolutionize both the civil and the ecclesiastical constitution of the land. He failed, and he paid the penalty of failure. But it would be unjust to the Puritans and treason to constitutional liberties to forget for one moment that never was issue more deliberately joined, that never was fate more daringly provoked, that never were great principles more formally calculated or more fully stated. Whatever our technical verdict, whatever our human or sentimental pity concerning both Charles and Laud, it is indubitably true that they “sowed the wind and reaped the whirlwind.”

III.

THE WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY.

BY

J. STOUGHTON, D.D.

Contents of Lecture 3.

ASSEMBLY met in troublous times—Struggle between Pym and Stratford, and the changes which immediately followed—Outbreak of Civil War—Assembly convened by Parliament—First Meeting—Military help sought from Scotland—League and Covenant—Presbyterian, Independent and Erastian members—Estimate of their character—Polemical discussions between Presbyterians and Independents, between Presbyterians and Erastians, and between Independents and the other parties—The doctrines of the Westminster Confession—Theories of the Assembly as to society, religion, the church, worship, and reform—Influence of the Assembly in England, Scotland and America—Position and influence of the Independents—Their ground for toleration.

III.

THE WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY.

NOBODY can properly understand the history and character of the Westminster Assembly who reads only the minutes of its proceedings and the documents published by its authority. It arose out of a state of things which had long been preparing for a crisis; it became entangled in complications, which made up a network of influences, exceedingly difficult to unravel; it was fashioned, to a large extent, by political as well as ecclesiastical events; it included different elements needing to be carefully weighed and measured; and a clear distinction is to be drawn between what it attempted and what it accomplished. We must prepare a large canvas on which to paint our picture. It is necessary to employ all the delicate and firm handling at our command to gather up and weave together the threads which at first sight have a confused appearance; the purposes and aims of various parties must be separated from each other, and then candidly estimated; and our work will not be complete without an endeavour to penetrate into certain ideas lying at the foundation of the theory, which the majority of the Westminster divines were striving to work out and establish.

It may be said of the fabric which those remarkable men endeavoured to rear, that the wall and the street had to be "built in troublous times." A violent parlia-

mentary struggle arose in the winter of 1640-41 between John Pym and Lord Strafford—the most terrible political duel ever fought by party chieftains—which ended in the complete defeat and tragic death of the Royalist councillor, who with desperate courage upheld to the last his master's despotism. Then came petitions, remonstrances, and debates, which caught the House of Commons within the eddies of an excitement which scarcely finds an adequate parallel in storms surrounding the Irish Land Bill. Ecclesiastical affairs were amongst the chief matters in dispute, whilst political currents were strongly and rapidly rushing underneath. Episcopacy was attacked, root and branch. Bishops were dismissed from the House of Lords. The Star Chamber and High Commission Courts were abolished. Cathedral Chapters, as well as the prelatical order, came within the sweep of the enormous besom which raised dust in all directions. Deans and canons were compared to “old sacks,” “old shoes,” “old boots,” “old garments, dry and mouldy, such as the Gibeonites used to deceive their brethren;” even church music was denounced as “tickling to the ear without touching the heart, unless it was as with the deadly touch of asps in a tickling delight, or as the soft touch of the hyæna, which lulls to sleep that it may devour its victim.”

Under these circumstances the Westminster divines were called together to restore the desolate places of Zion. The Puritan clergy, in the December of 1641, asked that ecclesiastical matters might be referred to a Free Synod, differing in constitution from the old Convocation of clergy. In October, 1642, a Bill was introduced for that purpose, and it is noteworthy that two significant resolutions in connection with it passed the Committee of the Commons: namely, that the vote against bishops should be appended to the Bill, thus foreclosing attempts for the revival of episcopacy; and that Parliament did not intend to abrogate

the Prayer Book, thus leaving a door open for the use of a revised liturgy. Revolutionary ideas were held in check by conservative tendencies, and Parliament at the moment marched with measured steps. It was on the 15th of October that the Bill was introduced; before the month was out, on Sunday the 23rd, war between King and Parliament—threatened in August by the unfurling of the Royal Standard at Nottingham, and prepared for on both sides by the marshalling of troops—broke out at Edgehill, and brother Englishmen reddened their hands in each other's blood. Before the Assembly met, in July, 1643, Lord Brooke had been killed at the siege of Lichfield in the month of March; John Hampden had been shot on Chalgrove field in the month of June. The memory of these losses fell fresh on the minds of the Assembly at their first meeting in that memorable summer. Literally, a life and death struggle was going on; and the grave men in Genevan gowns, or plain doublets, who marched through the Dean's Yard to take their places in the now world-renowned Council Chamber, had then and afterwards, not only to contend for truth, but to struggle for existence.

Their meeting was under the authority and control of Parliament. Parliament selected the place, appointed the time, nominated the members, and paid the expenses. It took the direction of affairs into its own hands, stipulating that only things proposed to the Assembly by Parliament should be discussed, and that in difficult cases reference was to be made to the original authority. It is curious to notice how Erastian was the basis of this very Assembly, which so frequently protested against Erastianism. A clause was inserted in the ordinance of appointment, that the persons assembled were not to "exercise any jurisdiction, power, or authority ecclesiastical" beyond what was particularly expressed; but members of the Assembly were placed on "the Committee of Scandalous

Ministers," "the Committee of Plundered Ministers," and "the Committee of Triers," and there, in one way or another, had the chief administration of ecclesiastical affairs.

Laymen were summoned as members of the Assembly. "There must be some laymen in the Synod," said John Selden, "to overlook the clergy, lest they spoil the civil work, just as when the good woman puts a cat into the milk-house to kill a mouse, she sends her maid to look after the cat, lest the cat should eat up the cream." The laymen were few, but they were of political importance, all of them decided Parliamentarians. A few moderate Episcopalians were summoned, including four bishops. Of the bishops, only one attended, and he did not come a second time; other Episcopalians who appeared at first soon dropped off. The majority of the divines were Presbyterians, shades of colour descending from a light tint to the deepest blue. The Independents altogether did not amount to more than ten or eleven.

Walking into Westminster Abbey—where, beyond any other sacred English edifice, national memories of different kinds, from the time of the Confessor, cluster within the walls—one thinks of the congregation which assembled there on Saturday, the 1st of July, 1643, when Dr. Twiss preached a sermon from the words, "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come unto you." There sat the vast majority in black cloaks, broad bands, and small skull caps, where mitred bishops and priests in gorgeous copes had once ministered, and whence Anglican clergy had been recently dismissed. The sermon over, the members of the Assembly rose from their seats, and walked toward Henry the Seventh's chapel, of which the magnificent and beautiful architecture, we are pretty sure, did not affect their imagination as it does that of some amongst their descendants in the present day; for in the old Puritans

the spiritual mastered the material, and in their absorbing devotion to theological truth and ecclesiastical purity, the æsthetical tendencies of the nineteenth century would have been completely swallowed up. Under the vaulted roof, looking like the boughs of a petrified forest, the worthies thinking of far other things, stood and listened to the roll call, sixty-nine out of a much larger number answering to their names.

The first work prescribed for them by Parliament was a revision of the Thirty-nine Articles. Then came an order to take in hand the Liturgy, and the subject of ecclesiastical discipline.

We now reach another phase of the Westminster business. Military help from Scotland had become a pressing need for the party, of which the Westminster worthies were the ecclesiastical council and mouthpiece. Religious excitement to the north of the Tweed had been for some time most intense. The spirit of John Knox was in the ascendant, and the people were setting their faces as flint against the efforts of Charles and Laud for the restoration of prelacy. Fresh then was the story of Jenny Geddes, and the folding-stool she flung at the Dean. It betrays, however, a superficial acquaintance with history and human nature, to suppose that incidents of a trivial kind could be the cause of a deep and widespread revolution. A Highland boy looking down into a mountain torrent, would never be so simple as to fancy a piece of wood drifted on the top of the waters was guiding the impetuous rush; and it would be quite as simple to suppose that small events, which for singularity and quaintness have attracted attention, were really potent factors in the history of the world. They only float on the breast of the stream; the cause of the movement is of another description. It was not a riot in a church which defeated the foolish attempt of Charles I., but a persistent dislike to prelacy—that is what upset his cunning schemes. A

Scotch army had been called out in defence of liberty to worship God according to Scripture, as expounded by John Knox ; now, in the day of its extremity, an English Parliament looked to that army for aid in its own conflict with the Stuart policy. The success which shone on the royal banners in the summer of 1643, the occupation of Dorset and Devon by the King's army, the defeat of Fairfax in the north, the taking of Bradford, the capture of Bristol, the threatened siege of Gloucester—these were items in the war account of the Westminster patriots which alarmed the divines as the month of August opened. So eyes were turned to the other side of the border, though Calamy, in a Guildhall speech, pronounced it a shame that Englishmen should stand in need of being helped by another nation. Commissioners were despatched to Edinburgh, with letters to the Convention of States, and the General Assembly of the Church. They represented this country as “on the edge of a precipice, ready to fall into Satan's jaws.”

Scotchmen were fond of covenants ; and such instruments play a momentous part in their religious affairs. They had recently bound themselves by a fresh oath to oppose prelacy to the death ; and now that military succour was implored by Englishmen, it was resolved to grant it only on condition of their uniting in this solemn vow.

To understand the position of the two parties, it is necessary to distinguish between points of resemblance and points of difference. English and Scotch both disliked prelatical government. They had suffered so much at the hands of Laud, that the resentment kindled against him personally blended with the judgment they formed of his policy ; and many of them, identifying his excesses with all episcopalian theories, were unable to take an unprejudiced view of questions in dispute. They did not merely disapprove of a church government by

bishops, but they hated it with a bitter hatred. Whilst English and Scotch shared in this passionate feeling, they were further united in a zeal for parliamentary government under a constitutional monarch. So far Scotch and English were alike. But with this resemblance there existed a difference. Whilst ecclesiastical and political elements were at work on both sides the Tweed, the ecclesiastical throughout predominated in Scotland; the political, after the early outbursts against Laud, predominated in England. Pym and his associates were emphatically *Parliament* men; engaged in a parliamentary struggle to save the English Constitution from the encroachments of the Crown. Ecclesiastical questions, though often most prominent at the beginning of the struggle, and often afterwards coming to the front, were generally kept subordinate. Thus it came to pass that, through a victory achieved in the cause of religion, Scotchmen sought to promote the political well-being of their country; and, through victory for the rights of Parliament, Englishmen meant to promote the interests of what they deemed the true Church.

English Commissioners and representatives of the Scotch Church, when they met in Edinburgh, exhibited the resemblance and the difference I have pointed out. On both sides there was a wish to suppress prelacy; on both sides there was a strong attachment to popular power. But the English Commissioners were just then most desirous of getting military support for Parliament; and the Scotch authorities were, as before, most zealous for the Presbyterian Church. Moreover it is to be remembered that the Parliamentary Commissioner, Sir Harry Vane, had no Presbyterian sympathies: neither had the Assembly's Commissioner, Philip Nye, who was a professed Independent. Stephen Marshall, the other Ecclesiastical Commissioner, was the single one holding decidedly Presby-

terian opinions. When the two parties came to discuss terms of alliance, it speedily appeared that Vane and Nye were for a *civil league*, but the Scotch brethren were for a *religious covenant*.

The former were bent on putting down Charles Stuart ; the latter were bent on putting down popery and prelacy, and promoting the establishment of their own form of government. Vane and Nye had ideas of religious toleration utterly repudiated by their Scotch brethren. At last it was determined that the Scotch bond should be a *league* for civil purposes, and a *covenant* for religious ones. I cannot enter upon the hair-splitting distinctions so ingeniously devised, and I will not judge the motives which operated on either side ; but I must say that the English Commissioners were as much bound by the covenant as the league ; and how the independent Philip Nye, to say nothing of the mystic Sir Harry Vane, could accept the covenant and enter into a compact to enforce it on others, is past my comprehension.

On the return of these Commissioners to England, the Westminster Assembly met in St. Margaret's Church, and Nye there read the famous document, commending it as a defence against popery and prelacy. The members subscribed the document. Lords and Commons did the same, and soon copies of it went up and down the country, some of which, with the signatures, remain unto this day.

Upon turning to this rarely-read instrument, we find it calls to mind "the treacherous and bloody plots, conspiracies, attempts, and practices of the enemies of God against the true religion and professors thereof in all places, especially the three kingdoms ;" and then the subscribers are required to swear that they will preserve the reformed religion in the Church of Scotland, and promote reformation in England and Ireland, "according to the Word of

God, and the example of the best reformed churches ;” and that they will endeavour to bring the churches of the three kingdoms to uniformity in religion. Further, a pledge is given to extirpate popery and prelacy, which is defined as “government by archbishops, deans, archdeacons, &c.,” also “heresy, schism, and profaneness ; to preserve the rights of Parliament, and the liberties of the kingdom.” Further, they resolve to search out malignants who hinder the reformation of religion and oppose the covenant, “that they may be brought to public trial and receive condign punishment ;” and finally to remain in union, defending those who enter into this solemn bond. The whole closes with a confession of sins and resolutions of amendment.

Whatever may be thought of the document, I suppose there will be among us but one opinion as to the imposition of it upon the three kingdoms, under penalty, for disobedience, “of public trial and condign punishment.” To me I must say it is a melancholy story, and it makes me sad to think that men, whilst protesting against force for the suppression of their own ecclesiastical opinions, should employ force for the suppression of others. For a time, indeed, the league and covenant seemed triumphant, but only for a time. In a few short years it was superseded by the engagement, which, however, was of a different character ; and within twenty years the whole of this legislative system was swept away, and only memories of it remained to embitter the lives both of those who had supported and of those who had resisted it.

We are now pretty well prepared to look into the Jerusalem Chamber,* and notice some of the celebrities there

* After delivering the lecture I was asked why the name was given. Dr. Stanley considers it originated from tapestries or pictures of Jerusalem hung up there (*Historical Memorials of Westminster Abbey*, p. 374) ; but another authority says, “It is not impossible that

sitting in conclave. The room in 1648 was rather different from what it is now, yet in several respects the same. The walls were then, as now, hung with tapestry. The old mantelpiece still there had just been put up by Williams, Archbishop of York and Dean of Westminster, and a good fire blazed in winter-time, spoken of then as "a dainty thing in London." "Lords of the Parliament" dropped in now and then to sit and warm themselves, and we can see them in military or lay attire, in buff jerkin and orange scarf, in stately cloak and high-crowned hat, looking critically over the reverend members. Dr. Twiss is in the chair, placed on an elevation, at the upper end. A quiet, "bookish" man he is said to be, verging on seventy, with a long pale face, a large beard, a lofty brow, and a "meditative eye." "Now, at length," cries this thoughtful man on his death-bed, "I shall have leisure to follow my studies to all eternity." In front of him at a table, sit Henry Roborough and Adoniram Byfield, the two scribes, or secretaries. John White—"the patriarch of Dorchester," one who, as Fuller says, "willingly contributed his shot of facetiousness on any just occasion"—and Cornelius Burgess, "very active and sharp," acted as assessors. On each side the room were rows of benches, the lowest occupied by members deputed by the Assembly of the Scotch Church: George Gillespie, described by a Presbyterian historian as "a dazzling meteor;" Samuel Rutherford, of holy fame; Alexander Henderson, whose fate it was to carry on an ecclesiastical controversy with

this room may have derived its name from the fact that it adjoined the sanctuary. And a passage is cited from William of Malmesbury relating to Pope John: "Nec providit quòd est Romæ ecclesia Jerusalem dicta, id est visio pacis; quòd quicumque illuc confugerit cujus-cunque criminis obnoxius, subsidium inveniet."—*De Gestis Reg. Angl.*, lib. ii. p. 67. See *Gleanings from Westminster Abbey*, by Sir Gilbert Scott.

the King ; and Robert Baillie, the shrewd diarist, to whom we are indebted for a knowledge of the Assembly. On other forms were Dr. Arrowsmith, of St. John's College, Cambridge, a man with a glass eye, having lost one by a bow-shot, but quick-sighted enough in learning ; Thomas Gataker, an enormous book devourer, called by Baillie "half scholar and half fool ;" and Edmund Calamy, who had read Augustine through over and over again, and might count at his church door a long string of coaches, waiting to take home rich citizens and their wives—these were all Presbyterians.

The Independent representatives claim our special notice. Philip Nye was prominent and active, a bold leader, clever and persistent, always ready for debate, a great thorn in the sides of the Presbyterians—not so lovable as Jeremiah Burroughs. If Nye was "a sturdy woodcutter," as Luther called himself, Burroughs was the gentle husbandman, sowing and watering, like Philip Melancthon. William Bridge came next, one of the Yarmouth ministers, an early riser, who used to get up at four, winter and summer, to read fathers and schoolmen. Sidrach Simpson, first ejected by Archbishop Laud, and afterwards silenced by the Assembly for his opinions on church discipline, was another member of the little band ; and the fifth was Dr. Thomas Godwin, called "the Atlas of Independency," with shoulders broad enough alone to bear the whole system up the steep pathway of argumentative opposition. These five brethren had all suffered persecution for their principles, and had sought refuge in Holland, where they found liberty to carry them out in a practical church polity. On these grounds, as well as from personal qualities, the five were fitted to take the lead in advocating Independency against Presbyterianism ; but there were others who supported their advocacy. Joseph Caryl and William Carter, city clergymen ; John

Philips and Peter Sterry (the latter of the two becoming afterwards chaplain to Oliver Cromwell); Anthony Burgess, of Sutton Coldfield; and William Greenhill—whose faithful labours in Stepney are still held in grateful remembrance by the ancient Congregational church in that neighbourhood—were undoubtedly attached to the small Independent party. Herle, Marshall, and Vines, among the Presbyterians, also in some questions rendered help.

Close by sat another little knot, called Erastians, from the resemblance their opinions bore to those of Erastus, a native of Basle.* They identified the Church with the State, and regarded the clergy simply as teachers, whilst moral discipline was to be entirely left in the magistrates' hands. The so-called Erastians in the Assembly consisted of two divines—Dr. Lightfoot, the great Hebraist, and Thomas Coleman, less known, but perhaps not less profound

* As very vague notions of the opinions of Erastus are common, I subjoin extracts from his book on *Excommunication* :

“It is not the will of Christ that His kingdom in these lands should be circumscribed within narrower limits than He appointed for it anciently amongst the Jews” (Thesis xxxi.). “I see no reason why the Christian magistrate at the present day should not possess the same power which God commanded the magistrate to exercise in the Jewish Commonwealth” (Thesis lxxii.). “If, then, the Christian magistrate possesses not only authority to settle religion according to the direction given in the Holy Scriptures, and to arrange the ministries thereof, but also in like manner to punish crimes, in vain do some among us now meditate the setting up of a new kind of tribunal, which would bring down the magistrate himself to the ranks of a subject of other men” (Thesis lxxiv.).

According to Erastus, an ignorant man, a heretic, or an apostate should be excluded from the sacraments, but sins were to be punished by the magistrate. The Theses were originally published in 1589, under a fictitious name. Two old translations into English exist, published in 1659 and 1682. A modern one was issued by Dr. Lee, Edinburgh, 1844. I question whether the so-called Erastians in the Assembly were prepared to maintain all the Theses of Erastus.

in his acquaintance with Rabbinical lore. Three lay assessors of political distinction followed the same bent : they were the learned Selden, the sagacious Whitelocke, and Oliver St. John, from his mysterious ways known in political circles as the "dark lantern man." The last of the three, at one time simply an astute lawyer, afterwards took up ecclesiastical questions on the secular side, but with the religious sentiments of Goodwin and the rest he had not the slightest sympathy.

The Westminster Assembly has rarely been treated with justice. By Episcopalians generally it is depreciated, and by some of them it is dismissed with words of contempt. Clarendon speaks of the Assembly with scorn, and Walker writes against it with wearisome vituperation. Milton, who had incurred the censure of the divines by his doctrine of divorce, shows resentment against that censure through some sonorous sentences in his *History of England*. Baxter's words have been often quoted on this subject, and though not free from partiality, they deserve more than those of any other man to be repeated here :

"The divines there congregate were men of eminent learning and godliness and ministerial abilities and fidelity ; and being not worthy to be one of them myself, I may the more freely speak that truth which I know, even in the face of malice and envy, that, as far as I am able to judge by the information of all history of that kind, and by any other evidences left us, the Christian world, since the days of the apostles, had never a Synod of more excellent divines (taking one thing with another) than this Synod and the Synod of Dort were."

This is high praise, but it comes nearer to the truth than the verdicts pronounced by some others. The godliness of the men is proved by the spirit of their writings and the history of their lives. No one would think of comparing any of them with Jeremy Taylor in point of eloquence ; and in breadth of learning, in a skilful mastery of knowledge, the best were not equal to Hammond and

Pearson. Cosin would surpass them in some branches of study.

But the Westminster divines had learning—scriptural, patristic, scholastical, and modern—enough and to spare. Lightfoot and Selden and Arrowsmith and Calamy were ripe and ready scholars; Caryl and Greenhill had abundance of knowledge; Goodwin was, in some respects, the greatest divine amongst them all.

Having catalogued the men and estimated their character, let us listen to their discussions. Some of those discussions were polemical, and some of them were harmonious.

Taking up first the polemical, I remark that controversies were carried on between Presbyterians and Independents. All Presbyterians were not alike in their ecclesiastical views. Some were for the *jus divinum* of their system, such as the Scotch delegates; others were for the *jus humanum*, resting their cause on principles of expediency. Twiss, Gataker, and Reynolds, afterwards Bishop of Norwich, were of this number. They were all more or less opposed to the system of Independent Church polity; but it should be borne in mind that they professed themselves willing to receive Independents within the circle of a State Establishment, provided they did not gather people into distinct societies of their own. This, the Presbyterians maintained, would be creating schism in the Church; but to say they would admit Independents, but exclude Independency, was a contradiction both in word and deed. Any State Church will admit people holding all sorts of opinions, if they will but hold their tongues; nay, in many cases they may talk as much as they like, if they do not put their principles into practice.

The Presbyterians, in consequence of the parliamentary order to frame a system of discipline, and a direction of worship, in the room of what had been swept away, pre-

pared a scheme on their own principles concerning pastors and teachers, ruling elders and deacons. This led to a controversy about ordination in the spring of 1644. The Independents, not considering themselves fairly dealt with by their brethren in reference to these matters, published what they called an *Apologetic Declaration*, addressed to Parliament.

Besides a controversy, that same spring, as to *ordination*, there arose another between the Presbyterians and the Independents touching this point—whether *several particular Congregations might be ruled by one Presbytery*—a vital question to both parties. Twenty long sittings were occupied by the debate; but, whilst Baillie acknowledges the learning, wit, and eloquence of his antagonists, he informs us that when the Assembly came to the vote, every one of the arguments in the Independent side “was voiced, and found to be light unanimously, by all but themselves.” Before and after this controversy on ecclesiastical organizations, there was waged a further one, in which the question of the very existence of Independency might be said to be involved, namely, that of *toleration*.

The principles of Independency required of their supporters that they should be advocates of toleration. If churches be composed of those only who give credible proof of faith; if these churches regard their members as the only parties coming within the reach of their discipline; if they be communities standing apart from political alliances—then it follows that no authority of theirs can touch those that are without, that no civil penalties are to be inflicted for religious offences, and that political toleration is to be conceded to religionists of every class, and to men of no religion at all. In harmony with such sentiments we find the following words used in 1644: “If security may be taken by the wisdom of the State for civil subjection, why may not even Papists enjoy tolera-

tion?" And again, in another publication, "By God's command the magistrate is discharged to put the least discourtesy on any man, Turk, Jew, Papist, Socinian, or whatever, for his religion." These latter words have been put into the lips of Philip Nye, and he is represented as uttering them in the Jerusalem Chamber; but they really occur in a tract, supposed to have been written by John Goodwin, the Arminian; and I question whether Nye ever went so far with respect to toleration as John Goodwin. However, Nye did contend that the establishment of such Presbyteries as were advocated in the Assembly was inconsistent with the existence of religious liberty. This so shocked the majority that he was in danger of expulsion.

A Committee of Accommodation was suggested, it is said, by Oliver Cromwell; but it met and argued in vain. Independents maintained that signs of grace were essential to church fellowship, and that all members had a right to vote in the management of affairs. Presbyterians, on the other hand, admitted to membership all who were not scandalous in their lives, and vested power entirely in the hands of the Presbytery. The constitution of Presbyterianism and the constitution of Independency, as then held by their respective advocates, were found incompatible.

Presbyterians had to dispute with Erastians as well as with Independents; but the controversy was of a different character. Stripped of its tiresome verbiage, and removed out of a cloud of learned dust, the questions seem to have been these: Wherein does church discipline consist, and by whom is it to be exercised? and, Which power is to be supreme in a State-established Church, the spiritual or the temporal? As to the first of these points, the Presbyterians maintained that "pastors and teachers have power to inquire and judge who are fit to be admitted to the sacraments or kept from them; and also who are to

be excommunicated or absolved from that censure." The Presbyterian principle was that disciplinary church authority is vested in Presbyteries. The Erastians, as represented by Selden, were opposed altogether to any idea of church excommunication; and, not regarding any offences as subject to discipline except moral offences, they said the punishment of them ought to be left to the civil magistrate. Selden and Gillespie broke several lances with each other in this dispute, the former contending that Christ referred to the Sanhedrim, or civil court, when He said, "Tell it to the *ecclesia*;"* and the latter asserting, in seven distinct arguments, that our Lord referred to spiritual cases unknown to modern civil courts; also that the Jewish Church dealt in spiritual censures. The Erastian controversy soon disappears in debates of the Assembly, to be revived, however, in a bolder form by the Presbyterian majority in its opposition to the policy of Parliament. In this phase of the controversy the fundamental question as to whether the Church should rule the State, or the State rule the Church, came prominently on the carpet. Its agitation arose out of a petition by the Assembly to the House of Commons, for a legislative sanction of Presbyterian courts. The House was very chary as to this matter; and at last, when an ordinance of the Lords and Commons "about suspension from the Lord's Supper" was framed, Parliament in disputed cases was made a court of final appeal. This Erastian arrangement provoked Presbyterian displeasure; but ruling power in Parliament, after the Naseby fight, in 1645, having been grasped by a victorious army, the state of things became very different from what it had been when the covenant came over from Scotland in 1643, Parliament now felt no fear of Presbyterian opposition,

* Here Selden appears maintaining one of the theses of Erastus.

whether manifested by English ministers or Scotch delegates. However the theory of Church supremacy, or of Independency, might stand in the Jerusalem Chamber, State supremacy is seen carried out in practice on the floor of St. Stephen's. And let me add, during this conflict Independents appear at times on the side of Erastians against Presbyterians; at other times, on the side of Presbyterians against Erastians; *now* all of them resisting, in accordance with their distinctive principles, the Presbyterian attempt to rule the religious interests of England by means of church courts; and *then* some of them, in accordance with their distinctive principles, condemning the Erastian doctrine by agreeing to the broad Presbyterian proposition, "The Lord Jesus, as King and Head of His Church, hath therein appointed a government, in the hand of church officers, distinct from the civil magistrate." *

It is time to notice that, whilst in the Assembly there were discussions violently polemical, there were also discussions pleasantly harmonious. Such was the case with reference to the Westminster Confession. A beautiful circumstance is mentioned by Dr. Stanley.

"There was a story once told me by an American Presbyterian minister in the Jerusalem Chamber at Westminster, that the Assembly of Westminster divines, when they were engaged in drawing up the Confession of Faith, and when they came to the question of making a definition of the Supreme Being, found the difficulty so overwhelming that they proposed to have a special prayer offered up for light. The youngest minister present was to undertake the office. It was, according to the English tradition, Calamy; according to the Scottish tradition, Gillespie. He rose up in the Assembly, and he began his prayer by an impassioned and elaborate invocation of the Almighty,

* Neal says of the Presbyterians' proceedings at this time (1646), "The Independents took this opportunity to leave them, refusing absolutely to be concerned in the affair" (vol. iii. p. 328). Yet on the next page he gives the names of Carter, Goodwin, Nye, and Greenhill as appended to the proposition.

which he had hardly uttered, when the whole Assembly broke out in the exclamation, 'This shall be our definition!'" *

When we turn to look at the known opinions of the divines, in reference to doctrines, we find that, leaving out the Erastians, most, though not all, dissented from Arminian opinions. Dr. Twiss was a Supralapsarian, Dr. Goodwin was a High Calvinist; but Reynolds was moderate, saying as to the Article on Predestination, "Let us not put disputes and scholastic things into a Confession of Faith;" and of Dr. Arrowsmith, I should judge, from the high estimate formed of him by Whichcote, a great ornament of the Cambridge or Latitudinarian school, that he could not have been by any means an extreme man. Baillie tells us, "There were long and tough debates on the doctrine of election;" but owing to the great preponderance on the side of Calvinism, the doctrinal formulas are unmistakably of that character. However, I do not find any record of discussions on doctrine manifesting the asperity which is so conspicuous in those which relate to ecclesiastical discipline.

The Assembly's Confession crosses the whole field of dogmatic theology, observing an order of thought common to the oldest creeds, and the most elaborate scholastic systems—namely, descending from God to man, dwelling first upon the nature of the Divine Being, then unfolding His gracious purposes respecting the human race. But it prefixes to the whole of its doctrinal developments a section on the Holy Scriptures as necessary and authoritative, and before reaching its close it takes up the subject of oaths, the civil magistracy, marriage and divorce, church

* *Addresses and Sermons in America.* My late friend gave me no other authority for this anecdote than what an American minister told him. I have endeavoured in vain to verify the story by historical documents. I find it, however, current amongst our transatlantic brethren.

censures, synods, and councils. In connection with the Westminster Catechisms, it is pronounced by Dr. Schaff as the fullest and ripest symbolical statement of Calvinism, and in theological ability equal to the best works of the kind, not even surpassed by the Lutheran Formulary of Concord or the Decrees of the Council of Trent. As to the learning and skill which the Confession exhibits, I fully concur with my honoured friend, and I also agree with one who has recently passed away amidst the love and reverence of so many amongst us, that "it far more nearly approaches the full proportions of a theological treatise, and exhibits far more depth of theological insight than any other."* Its comprehensiveness and precision is most remarkable; for, whilst lacking the sententiousness of a creed, and contrasting with the studied brevity of the Thirty-nine Articles, it branches out into ample and far-seeing definitions of doctrinal beliefs, such as belong to ramified schemes of doctrine. It aims, more than any other church standard, at presenting a complete body of divinity. Of what lies at the basis of its doctrines I shall have a word to say, as I proceed to examine what appears to me to throw light on the Westminster theories of society, religion, the Church, worship, and religious reform.

I. As to the theory of society. That entertained by the divines is a very old idea—that human society is much more than a haphazard aggregate of men and women, much more even than a compact, however originated and developed, between the individuals of our race, according to nationalities and other divisions. Ancient lawgivers and pagan philosophers saw in the conditions of human existence something Divine, and pleaded the

* Dr. Stanley's *Lectures on Church of Scotland*, p. 77. A fuller and, in some respects, a still more favourable estimate is furnished in an article published, since his decease, in *Macmillan's Magazine*.

sanction of their deities in support of the laws of men ; and Plato, in his famous book on the subject, represents the Athenian as acknowledging the co-operation of God with the skill of the legislator in the formation of states, and that the best polity is that which enjoins *the fear of God* and the cultivation of virtue and justice. Even pagans were not satisfied with the notion that society is an accident, or a scheme simply for promoting the material and temporal interests of mankind. They connected human society with a Divine Providence, and a Divine Will. To a godless theory on this momentous question, the best of them were opposed ; and I need not say that in the Old Testament God is first and last, in the story of humanity as there written ; and in the New Testament a Divine order in relation to political government is distinctly taught. That “the Lord reigneth,” and that there are interests involved in the evolutions of mundane affairs which vastly transcend the rights of property and the rights of persons—these are truths expressed or implied from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Revelation. And most firmly did the thoughtful men who conferred together in the Jerusalem Chamber believe in the Bible idea of social and political life. They believed, not that politics should rule religion, but that religion should rule politics. Most of them, however, made a mistake in working out the principle. They took into their own hands what they should have left in the hands of God. They constituted themselves a sort of ecclesiastical police, to look after people’s religious opinions, and to punish those whom they regarded as disobedient to the faith. Many of the Presbyterian divines made themselves justices of the peace in God’s world, with a commission to check religious error by inflicting pains and penalties on those who maintained it. That was their mistake. But to insist on the Divine aspect of society in opposition to

infidel theories ; to proclaim the necessity of religion for the well-being of mankind ; to enunciate and enforce the fundamental principle of Robert Hall's magnificent sermon on modern infidelity—that is wise and good, and really forms a part of every Christian minister's business, and it requires to be zealously enforced at the present moment. Sure I am that the conviction of this world being a divinely ruled world, the conviction that Jesus Christ is King of kings and Lord of lords, constituted the root out of which sprung the sublime heroism of the best amongst the Puritans ; and if that conviction be lost by us, if it be eaten out of our minds and hearts by modern political speculations, then farewell to that which constitutes the moral strength, the pith, the sinews of our Christian manhood, farewell to all suffering for conscience' sake, a long farewell to everything like martyrdom and confessorship.

II. The Westminster theory of religion was still more characteristic. I cannot dwell on the constant appeal of these theologians to Divine revelation as the authority for their opinions, nor have I space to examine what I consider to be their defects on the one hand, and their merits on the other, as to the mutual relations of religion and theology. I can but touch upon a central idea in their system—that of God's supremacy in the spiritual as in the natural world. Looking at men as men in this mysterious but beautiful cosmos of law and order, we are all constrained to say, “By the grace of God we are what we are.” And this conviction the divines carried into the spiritual world. With them God was first in grace, as in nature. Divine sovereignty laid hold on their thoughts with amazing power, and here I think I find the secret of their Calvinism. It is a shallow criticism which picks holes in the Confession and Catechism without going deep enough to see what is visible at the bottom of them. I

deplore that they did not look sufficiently at man's responsibility in connection with God's sovereignty, nor can I adopt all they say in reference to Divine decrees; but of this I am quite sure, that at the end of our researches into history, human nature, and spiritual experience, we come upon *something* which, though last in a philosophical analysis, stands first in the order of causation. We come upon a *Divine residuum* at the bottom of the crucible. We are constrained to confess, when we have enumerated all that we can think of in the form of second causes, that something remains in which, whilst man is the subject, God is the agent. The power, *ultimate* in our investigation, is *primary* in the real series of spiritual facts.

I have been much struck with the following passage in Jowett's *Commentary on Epistles of St. Paul*,* as bearing on the subject now before us :

"In the New Testament" (he says), "where religion has become a personal and individual matter, it follows that election must also be of persons. The Jewish nation knew, or seemed to know, one fact—that they were the chosen people. They saw also eminent men raised up by the hand of God to be the deliverers of His servants. It is not in this 'historical' way that the Christian becomes conscious of his individual election. From within, not from without, he is made aware of the purpose of God respecting himself. Living in close and intimate union with God, having the mind of the Spirit, and knowing the things of the Spirit, he begins to consider with St. Paul, 'When it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, to reveal His Son in me.' His whole life seems a sort of miracle to him; supernatural, and beyond other men's in the gifts of grace which he has received. If he asks himself, 'Whence was this to me?' he finds no other answer but that God gave them because He had favour unto him. He recalls the hour of his conversion, when in a moment he was changed from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. Or perhaps the dealings of God with him have been insensible, yet not the less real: like a child, he cannot remember the time when he first began to trust the love of his parent. How can he separate himself

* Vol. ii.

from that love, or refuse to believe that He who began the good work will also accomplish it unto the end? At which step in the ladder of God's mercy will he stop? 'Whom He did foreknow, them He did predestinate; whom He did predestinate, them He also called'; whom He called, them He justified; whom He justified, them He also glorified.'"

This certainly is not the whole of what is taught in the Westminster system; and the gifted author of the passage quoted would shrink from the thought of adopting that. Yet he really expresses a fact upon which the divines laid hold with undivided attention; and by logical reasonings about it wrought it out into a compact, but a very one-sided, scheme of scholastic divinity. Let us, however, take care that, in contriving what we regard as a more comprehensive theory, we give due prominence to the imperial facts which so powerfully swayed the Westminster divines.

III. The Assembly's theory relative to the Church is plain enough, at least on its negative side. It was anti-popish and anti-prelatical with a vengeance. It was anti-Eraſtian also, with scarcely less of antagonistic momentum.

The Presbyterian church polity on its positive side is to be gathered from the latter part of the Confession; from the document entitled "Form of Presbyterian Government;" and from an examination of facts which appear in the partial adoption of the system during the Civil Wars and the Commonwealth.

The chapters in the Confession on church censures and synods and councils are brief; but they are supplemented in the other document just named. The Confession says (chap. xxx.), after an allusion in general terms to church officers:

"To these officers the keys of the kingdom of heaven are committed, by virtue whereof they have power respectively to retain and remit sins, to shut that kingdom against the impenitent, both by the

word and censures, and to open it unto penitent sinners by the ministry of the gospel, and by absolution from censures as occasion shall require."

This law places church authority entirely in the hands of church officers; but these officers, it is to be noticed, included lay-elders, together with other persons commonly called clergymen. The fundamental difference on the part of Independency was, that it proceeded upon the principles of members in general, as well as officers in particular, being depositaries of ecclesiastical powers; but it is curious to find, from the researches of Dr. Dexter,* how amongst the early Independents there were some societies which, whilst in theory they adopted the democratic principle, introduced in practice an aristocratic element by entrusting all active power to church officers.

Turning to the Form of Presbyterian Government, we read, "It is lawful and agreeable to the Word of God that the Church be governed by several sorts of assemblies which are congregational, classical, and synodical." And further, "It is lawful and agreeable to the Word of God that there be a subordination of congregational, classical, provincial, and national assemblies for the government of the Church." This sanctions the calling of a general assembly; but such an assembly never appeared in England even when Presbyterianism was at its zenith.

It is worth notice that in the second section of the thirty-first chapter of the Confession it is admitted that "Magistrates may lawfully call a synod of ministers and other fit persons to consult and advise with about matters of religion." This statement brought the calling of the Westminster Assembly by Parliament into harmony with *the letter of the law* as laid down by the divines; but how

* See his *Lectures on the Congregationalism of the last Three Hundred Years*.

their actual position in relation to Parliament could be logically reconciled with anti-Erastian doctrines is a great puzzle.

The main basis of these ecclesiastical conclusions was sought in scriptural authority. To the same standard of faith and practice Episcopalians and Congregationalists also appealed. The conflicts between the Presbyterians and the dissenting brethren chiefly turned on the interpretation of sacred texts. "The judicious Hooker" had disputed the opinions of contemporary Puritans, and had affirmed within certain limits the principle of expediency; but he was far from setting aside God's Word as a leading factor in the construction of a church system. Cartwright, in his excessive zeal for the maintenance of Divine authority in church matters, had said, "To take up a straw without a warrant from God was a sin." "The sentence of the apostle reacheth even to the taking up a straw;" and probably there were some in the Jerusalem Chamber prepared to follow that great leader. But it appears to me, as it did to our Congregational fathers fifty years ago, that there may be detected a true instinct at the bottom of these convictions; that an authoritative guide in the conduct of ecclesiastical government is to be looked for in the New Testament—not, indeed, in every minutiae, but as to broad fundamental principles—and that we diminish our strength by shifting our ground from Bible precedents and principles to general reasonings as to what we may consider to be wise and proper.

IV. As to the theory of worship. It was opposed to priestism, to ceremonialism, and to the use of the Anglican Liturgy. It allowed to the clergy nothing like mediatorship. An extreme simplicity in public ordinances was strictly enjoined; and extempore prayer was universally used. The directory suggested topics of supplication, but left the arrangement and the phraseology to the discretion

of each minister. Yet, whilst Presbyterians conceded this liberty in prayer, which in the estimation of Episcopalians was unlawful, they sought to impose a form of praise which Episcopalians left open to the choice of their ministers. Puritans of all classes were alike in aversion to what is ornate in Divine service. They were shocked at mediæval rites and ceremonies; the popish mass and its accompaniments filled them with indignation, and they had no inkling of the modern idea, of æstheticism and comeliness in worship apart from superstition and sacerdotalism. There had been a good deal of irreverence and slovenliness in cathedrals and churches after the Reformation; and against it Archbishop Laud had set up an intolerant opposition which, in its turn, provoked a fresh reaction on the opposite side. Ritualism had been denounced in days before the Civil Wars and the Commonwealth; also in cathedrals and parish churches, under Elizabeth and James, many things had been done not decently and in order. Old cries came to be repeated with increased vehemence whilst the Westminster Assembly held its sittings; and looking at the one-sidedness of human minds, it is not to be wondered at that, in a season of extraordinary excitement, the men, who had been persecuted by the archbishop, should come to think less of what is fair and beautiful in the House of God than it became them to do. George Herbert quaintly refers to the Church of Rome as—

“ She on the hills, which wantonly
Allureth all in hope to be
By her preferred,
Hath kissed so long her painted shrines,
That e'en her face by kissing shines
For her reward.”

And then in contrast he proceeds to speak of Puritanism as—

“ She in the valley is so shy
Of dressing, that her hair doth lie
About her ears ;
While she avoids her neighbour's pride,
She wholly goes on th' other side,
And nothing wears.”

I hope we have come to see that, whilst meretricious adornments in the service of God are to be condemned and shunned, consistency does not require us to take up with an unsightly nakedness of worship under pretence of simplicity.

V. The Westminster theory of reform is indicated by the particulars just adduced—a reform of doctrine, of policy, of worship—but it was by no means a scheme of ecclesiastical revolution excogitated out of their own brains. It had come to them by inheritance from their Puritan forefathers. Seventeenth century Presbyterianism was but a development of sixteenth century Puritanism. The seed sown in England during the Commonwealth came from thrashing out harvests gathered in Geneva and Frankfurt in the days of Queen Mary. There was scarcely anything new propounded at Westminster. Cartwright was the great pioneer who made the road along which Calamy and his companions marched. A Presbyterian polity was inaugurated at Wandsworth long before synods were set up in London and Manchester.

In conclusion, allow me to advert to the influence exerted by this famous Assembly. It is very true, as mentioned already, that what Presbyterians planned and desired was never accomplished in this country. The imperfect establishment of the system during the Civil Wars and Commonwealth was overturned entirely at the Restoration ; and what was afterwards called English Presbyterianism differed ecclesiastically from Independency only in this particular—that it was more limited, perhaps less careful,

in the exercise of discipline, and threw the management of affairs almost entirely into the hands of ministers.

English Presbyterianism during the last century, in spite of doctrinal divergencies, had a historical connection with the proceedings of the Westminster Assembly. On its negative side it had even a sympathetic relation to the proceedings a hundred years before, for it was a continued protest against the hierarchical pretensions of the Establishment, its sacerdotal theory, and its sacramental ideas. And as to that increasing body in the present day which calls itself the Presbyterian Church of England, it is an outgrowth of the principles and spirit of the Westminster fathers, and it upholds the teaching of the Westminster Confession.

But to measure the influence of the Assembly, we must pass from England to Scotland. The directory of worship was ratified by the General Assembly at Edinburgh in 1645. The form of church government and ordination was adopted by the same body in the same year. The Confession of Faith passed that supreme court in 1647, and the Larger and Shorter Catechism were adopted in 1648. Thus stone by stone, piece by piece, the blocks hewn out of the quarry on the banks of the Thames were conveyed to the shores of the Firth of Forth, there to be built up into an ecclesiastical fabric, which, in spite of controversial blasts and political earthquakes, still encompasses within its walls a large proportion of our Scotch brethren.

When we travel out of Great Britain we find the Westminster system prevailing in the North of Ireland; and crossing over the Atlantic, we behold in the United States and the Canadian Colonies, unmistakable proofs of the loving veneration in which the standards here unfurled in the middle of the seventeenth century are held by the Presbyterian Christendom of America.

Passing beyond Presbyterian boundaries, we are arrested

by vivid traces of Westminster influence upon the old Nonconformity of England. It was the mould into which Calvinistic dissenters poured their dogmatic faith, and they were jealous of all speculations which bore a different impress. Moreover the Assembly's Catechism was taught in our families and schools when I was a boy; and there are honoured ministers amongst us still who, as the prevalent theological atmosphere is rather relaxing, proudly assert their ability to repeat the principal answers, even with proofs, and who attribute to that early athletic training the stalwart strength which enables them victoriously to encounter weaker brethren.

How the theological influence of Augsburg and Dort pales away before that of Westminster !

“ Truly ” (remarks Dr. Schaff) “ the Assembly forms the most important chapter in the ecclesiastical history of England during the seventeenth century. Whether we look at the extent or ability of its labours, or its influence upon future generations, it stands first amongst Protestant Councils.”

“ The Canons of Dort have lost their hold upon the mother country; the Confession and Shorter Catechism of Westminster are as much used now in Anglo-Presbyterian churches as ever, and have more vitality and influence than any other Calvinistic Confession.”

The five brethren with their four or five companions are men to whom we look back with special interest as bearing the old historic names of Independents. They agreed with the Presbyterians in Calvinistic orthodoxy. What hand they had in composing the Confession and Catechisms, I do not know. Their chief distinction, and it is a highly meritorious one, is that in an age when the current ran in an opposite direction, they contended for religious toleration. Their views were not perfect; they jealously limited the freedom of which they were champions; they so valued evangelical truth that they trembled, as we think unwisely, lest by conceding liberty to those who had adopted serious errors, they should be

helping to spread the mischief. We must distinguish between the defectiveness of their theory and the moral worth and intellectual foresight of men who stood forward, a little band, to fight in the Thermopylæ of religious freedom against odds which we never, in our day, have to encounter. I find it so easy to sing, in our time, the songs of liberty, that I am ashamed to say anything to the disparagement of those who, under different circumstances, did not speak with so clear a voice; but if we can beat them now in *words*, they in deeds two hundred and forty years ago beat us hollow.

We owe them a great debt for the influence which they exerted; the effect of this has lived ever since, and we are profoundly grateful. In a spirit of gratitude I would wind up all I have to say by pointing to the true ground which they occupied in carrying on their warfare against intolerance. They were not the only soldiers in that memorable strife. Chillingworth, in his work on *The Religion of Protestants*, remarks, in a passage of singular eloquence, that "the imposing of human meaning on the words of God, and the laying them on men's consciences under penalty of death and damnation, is the fountain of schism, and that which makes schisms immortal." Hales, in his tract on *Schism*, complains that it has been the common disease of Christians from the beginning, not to content themselves with that measure of faith which God and the Scriptures have expressly afforded, but to attempt devising things of which we have no light from reason or revelation. Both these writers insisted upon the uncertainty of certain explanations and conclusions, as a reason for not enforcing them. Jeremy Taylor, in his *Liberty of Prophesying*, takes somewhat similar ground; for he dwells on the difficulties of Scripture, the uncertainty of tradition, the insufficiency of councils, the fallibility of popes and fathers, and the incompetency of

the Church to judge of controversies. Reason is pronounced by Taylor "the best interpreter," and though some causes of error may be culpable, he says many are innocent. To base toleration on the *uncertainty of truth* is a very insecure method. The alliance of scepticism damages the cause of freedom. The five dissenting brethren did *not* take this ground. They had ideas of Christian faith and worship more definite and decided than Chillingworth and Hales. The devotion that would have satisfied the latter would have starved the cravings of Jeremiah Burroughs and his companions. Nor could they agree with Jeremy Taylor. Besides all this, the advocacy of *comprehension* which was in the thoughts of Chillingworth, Hales, and Taylor (how they meant to deal with those who could not be comprehended in a Broad Church, is not quite apparent) was different from the toleration without *comprehension*, contemplated by "the dissenting brethren." They were prepared, though within certain limits, to grant liberty of profession and action to those whom they regarded as in serious error; and they left the judgment of them to God, not daring to undertake it themselves. Thus we see that their ideas of tolerance originated not in doubt or in indifference, but were combined with the strongest religious faith. In this respect they resembled Leonard Busher and John Goodwin, the religious leaders of a little company, who contended for the largest liberty ere Locke formulated the modern doctrine of religious freedom. It is getting to be a fashionable notion that toleration is the offspring of scepticism. If so, then Lord Herbert and Hobbes of Malmesbury ought to have been its apostles, but they were not; and the Baptists, the Independents, and the people called Quakers ought *not* to have been its early apostles—but they were.

IV.

*INDEPENDENTS IN THE DAYS OF THE
COMMONWEALTH.*

BY

EUSTACE R. CONDER, M.A.

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IV.

INDEPENDENTS IN THE DAYS OF THE COMMONWEALTH.

G AINSAY it who will, the indelible facts of history bear witness that English liberty and English Puritanism—of which English Congregationalism is the lineal representative—are born sisters. And if the elder sister boasts a thousand years of growth before Puritanism was born, yet the younger sister was her faithful nurse and dauntless defender through those days of deadly peril in which two generations of English kings laboured to build an absolute despotism on the ruins of all that to-day makes us glory in the name of free-born Englishmen.

In the eighth year of the reign of Queen Elizabeth (A.D. 1566) a number of ministers of the Church of England, silenced for nonconformity (especially in regard to ecclesiastical vestments), came to the conclusion, after earnest conference, debate, and prayer, that it was lawful to separate from the Established Church, and to meet in private for Divine worship and Christian fellowship. In June of the year following, a company of about one hundred men and women assembled for worship in the city of London (at Plumber's Hall) were surprised by the sheriff's officers, and above twenty of them, after examination before the Bishop of London and the Lord Mayor, were committed to prison. In the list of their names, that of Richard Fytz does not occur; but he is named in

other documents preserved in the State Paper Office as "minister" of "the Privy Church in London," and is one of many who "were by long imprisonment pined and killed."*. Thus appears and vanishes on the page of history the first Independent or Congregational church in England of which any definite record exists.

Five and twenty years later, Lord Bacon, speaking of the maintainers of Congregational church principles by their then current nickname, wrote, "as for those which we call Brownists, being when they were at the most a very small number of very silly and base people, here and there in corners dispersed, they are now, thanks be to God, by the good remedies that have been used, suppressed and worn out, so as there is scarce any news of them."† A year later (A.D. 1593), Henry Barrowe and John Greenwood were hanged at Tyburn for advocating (in such rough language as even princes and scholars used in those days) similar views; and in the same month John Penry suffered the like fate, being (to quote his own words) "accounted an enemy unto our State for no other suspicion and colour, but only because I have by public writing laboured to defend and induce in our Church that uniform order of church-regiment which our Saviour Christ hath ordained in His word to continue perpetually therein; and also have endeavoured to seek the utter ruin and overthrow of that wicked hierarchy of lord bishops, together with whatsoever corruption dependeth thereupon."‡ In the same year, Sir Walter Raleigh estimated the number of Brownists in England at twenty thousand men, not reckoning women and children.§

Within sixty years from the time when the wisest of

* Neal, i. 187, 197-201; Waddington, p. 742.

† Works, iii. 60. (Ed. 1819.)

‡ Hanbury, i. 74.

§ Hanbury, i. 34.

Englishmen wrote those bitterly scornful words, and imagined that the jailer and the hangman had extirpated what he called Brownism, Independent statesmen had stepped into the van in the battle for English freedom. Independent soldiers had turned defeat into victory at Marston Moor and at Naseby, broken the Scottish power at Dunbar, and at Worcester driven Charles II. and his army before them like leaves before a gale. An Independent ruled England, as the only possible saviour of the nation, king in all but name. And in learning and literature—not to name the two most popular writers in our language, the author of the *Pilgrim's Progress*, and the author of *Robinson Crusoe*—Independency was represented by Cromwell's Latin Secretary, whose fame as the grandest of English prose-writers has been obscured by his greater fame as the first, Shakespeare excepted, of English poets; by Dr. John Owen, Vice-Chancellor of Oxford; and by that loftiest, most accomplished, and most catholic-hearted of theologians and divines, John Howe.

A revolution, religious, intellectual, ecclesiastical, social, national, on such a scale and of such a character, deserves the most earnest study of all thoughtful, religious Englishmen; how much more of those who believe that the Church principles of those despised Barrowists and Brownists, of Milton, Owen, and Howe, rightly understood, not only lay down the true basis of liberty, civil as well as religious, but display the original lines on which the Christian Church was built by the Apostles, according to the design of the Divine Founder; and which are yet destined to be recognized as defining its true constitution, not as a national sect, but as a world-wide brotherhood.

Independency during that stormy but fruitful period of English history presents a triple aspect. To understand its bearing and influence on our national life, we must

study it as a Religious Movement, a Church System, a Political Power.

As a Religious Movement, it was the true offspring and logical complement of Puritanism. It made straight for the goal from which Presbyterianism swerved, Atalanta-like, to snatch the golden ball of Church power. It aimed at nothing short of securing the obedience of every conscience and intellect to the law of Christ, interpreted not by King, Bishops, or Presbyters, Kirk or Parliament, but by light from above, granted in answer to prayer to every honest, humble, intelligent student of God's written word.

As a Church System, mercilessly trampled out and uprooted in England, and attaining but a sparse and struggling growth even in the brief summer of Cromwell's reign, it grew freely in Dutch soil, and ripened that handful of grain which, sown on the shore of Massachusetts, to-day shakes like Lebanon, and has spread in two hundred and sixty years from ocean to ocean.

As a Political Power it was non-existent at the opening of the Long Parliament. It developed with wonderful rapidity and energy as Presbyterianism proved no less hostile than Prelacy to what is called "religious liberty"—in other words, civil liberty and equal rights in regard to the public exercise of religion. It became supreme when the chief power in the State passed from the remnant of the Parliament to the army. It fell with the ruin of the Commonwealth, never more to re-appear in the form of a separate political party; but too vitally bound up with English liberty not to share its resurrection; too deeply possessed with the conviction that religion is the cornerstone of national prosperity, and that citizenship is one of the talents for which a Christian has to give account, ever to seclude itself, in quest of monkish spirituality, from the realm of politics; pre-destined to form in these later days

something incomparably better, stronger, more useful than an Independent political party—the back-bone of the great party of freedom, justice, and progress.

Religion and politics are so intricately interwoven in the events of the great period we are speaking of, that it is not possible to consider either without reference to the other ; and to form any clear idea of the nature and value of any of the religious movements of that time, it is indispensable to have in mind at least some clear (if bare) outline of the sequence of public events.

Five years before the death of James I. (a year after the synod of Dort, and two years after the judicial murder of Sir Walter Raleigh), the *Mayflower* set sail, first from the shore of Holland, then from Southampton, having on board a dauntless band of colonists from the members of the English Independent Church at Leyden—the volunteer forlorn hope of English freedom. In grim battle with frost, famine, pestilence, death, with the courage of a faith that never faltered, they laid the foundations of a New England beyond the Atlantic. They were the vanguard of a great host, all Puritans though by no means all Independents, who wrenched themselves with bitter anguish of heart from the land they loved, to win what England denied, and what they loved yet more passionately—

“Freedom to worship God.”

The charter of the Massachusetts colony bore date March 4th, 1629, the day before the committal to the Tower of Sir John Eliot and other members of the House of Commons, and less than a week before the dissolution of Charles I.'s third parliament. During the twelve dark years that followed (A.D. 1629–1640), some four thousand “planters,” according to Neal, left England for America, and founded in addition to the settlements of Plymouth and Massachusetts, those of Connecticut and Newhaven. “The

leaders," says Neal, "of the people into those parts were Puritan ministers, who, being hunted from one diocese to another, at last chose this wilderness for their retreat" (ii. 186). According to Mr. Green's much higher estimate, during the eleven years preceding the meeting of the Long Parliament, "two hundred emigrant ships had crossed the Atlantic, and twenty thousand Englishmen had found a refuge in the West" (iii. 171).*

King Charles I. in the year of his accession (1625), summoned and dismissed his first Parliament, "perceiving," says Whitelock, "the Commons resolved against supply without redress of grievance." In February following a second Parliament was called, which the king vainly sought to convert to his own fixed idea regarding parliaments—that their end and use was to supply the Crown with money. They showed a yet more resolute temper; insisted on the right of Parliament to discuss the entire condition of the kingdom, and assailed the Duke of Buckingham as mainly responsible for the abuses and evils of which they complained. The king sent two messages warning them "that he could not suffer an inquiry on the meanest of his servants, much less against one so near him;" and in a speech addressed to both Houses, bade them remember "that the calling, sitting, and dissolving of parliaments was in his power." The Commons persevered in impeaching Buckingham. Two of their members were arbitrarily imprisoned (as likewise one of the peers on a distinct ground), but presently released. Before Midsummer, "this great, warm, and ruffling Parliament," as Whitelock calls it, was dissolved.

The king, with the support of his council, now entered on a course of arbitrary and lawless extortion. The

* These estimates are not inconsistent, if the first be taken to refer to heads of families, the second to include households.

supplies which Parliament had been ready to grant on condition of redress of grievances, he endeavoured to raise by means which immensely aggravated those grievances : illegal collection of customs, benevolences, forced loans, ship-money. Sir John Eliot and other gentlemen, refusing to pay the loan, were imprisoned. The Bishop of Lincoln incurred the royal displeasure for censuring the Government and favouring Nonconformists. Archbishop Abbott was suspended because he refused to license a sermon in which the monstrous doctrine was maintained, "that the King might make laws, and do whatsoever pleaseth him." A spirit of stubborn resistance and bitter resentment was kindled through the country. Thus within three years of Charles's accession, the quarrel was already begun between the Crown and Parliament, between the monarch personally, and all law-abiding, liberty-loving Englishmen, which twelve years later was to widen into irreconcilable enmity. The coals were already aglow which were to wrap England in the blaze of civil war.

Disaster abroad, discontent at home, and an empty exchequer, which his illegal expedients failed to replenish, compelled Charles to face his third Parliament in March, 1628. In that Parliament Oliver Cromwell sat for Huntingdon. It lasted twelve months, wanting one week ; of which time it was prorogued from Midsummer to the latter part of January. A reluctant consent was wrung from the King to the *Petition of Right*. The *Remonstrance* was presented, in which Buckingham was denounced as the prime cause of the evils under which the nation groaned ; but in the interval between the two sessions the assassin's knife put that public enemy beyond the reach of human justice. Led by one of the noblest, most gifted, and most religious of English statesmen, Sir John Eliot, the House of Commons laboured with wonderful patience, courage, and wisdom to rebuild the shattered fences of English liberty. In

Charles's opinion, liberty was but another word for sedition, rebellion, and treason ; the House of Commons was simply an engine of taxation, and high matters of state were wholly out of its province. His haughty, despotic temper and infatuated faith in the irresponsible prerogative and Divine right of kings, were reinforced by the influence of his idolized French Queen, the pivot of Popish intrigue, and the evil genius of Charles and of his kingdom. He dismissed his third Parliament with angry words about "*seditionous vipers in the Lower House.*" The Speaker and the members of the House of Commons were not so much as called to hear the dissolution pronounced. A few days before, Eliot, Selden, and other active members of the popular party had been sent to the Tower.

Now began the reign of undisguised and unrestrained despotism. From the dissolution of Charles's third Parliament, to the meeting of "the Short Parliament" in April, 1640—followed by that of "the Long Parliament" in November—is an interval of eleven years, during which not only the forms and safeguards of English liberty, but its very existence was suspended. Men were forbidden to talk of Parliament. The phrase, "liberty of the subject," became a court jest. For a few words reflecting on the Government, men were exposed to ruinous fines and hopeless imprisonment. The despotism of the Star Chamber and of the Court of High Commission trampled on trial by jury, and on every form of legal right. For writing a book against stage-plays—coarse and bitter, no doubt, but which perhaps no one except Archbishop Laud's chaplain, Peter Heylin, ever read through—William Prynne, barrister-at-law, was sentenced to be degraded from his profession, fined £5,000, to stand twice in the pillory, to have his ears chopped off, his nose slit, his forehead branded, and to be imprisoned for life.* Dr.

* Neal, ii. 227.

Bastwick, a physician, was imprisoned and fined £1,000 for publishing a book in which he asserted the equality of presbyters with bishops. Mr. Burton, a clergyman and bachelor of divinity, was imprisoned for two sermons. After four years' imprisonment these two men, guiltless of any offence against the laws of their country, were dragged from prison to undergo a fresh mockery of trial for writings suspected to have been published by them, and sentenced to be degraded, pilloried, to lose their ears, pay a fine of £5,000 each, and to be imprisoned for life. At the same time the hangman's knife was a second time applied to the stumps of Mr. Prynne's ears, and he was branded on both cheeks.* The historian, Hume, thinks this severity "*perhaps in itself somewhat blameable.*" †

Archbishop Laud, raised to the throne of Canterbury in 1633, and determined to make it indeed a throne, hunted down Puritanism, Calvinism, and Nonconformity with sleepless eye and merciless hand. The Rev. John Cotton, a man eminent alike as a preacher and a Christian, applied to the Earl of Dorset to intercede for him with the archbishop. The earl replied that if he had been guilty of drunkenness, uncleanness, or any such lesser faults, he could have got his pardon; but that the sin of Nonconformity was unpardonable, and he must flee for his life. Happily, he was able to act on this counsel, and escaping in disguise, joined the noble company of voluntary exiles in New England. ‡

As those eleven years of lawless license darkened to their close—lawless license not on the part of a misguided mob, an ignorant peasantry, or a disloyal faction, but on the part of those in whom it was a thousand-fold more guilty and destructive to the State, namely, the king, his ministers, the prelates, and those atrocious tribunals of

* Neal, ii. 253.

† Hanbury, i. 512.

‡ Neal, ii. 229.

the Star Chamber and the High Commission (which were in fact, one court in two forms), aided by the degradation and servility of a majority of the judges—patriotic and thoughtful Englishmen saw more and more plainly confronting them three alternatives: slavery, exile, or civil war. The men whose fathers had cheered Queen Elizabeth at Tilbury, and seen the wreck of the Armada strewn along our shores; whose grandfathers had looked on the fires of Smithfield; to whom Popery was synonymous with servitude as well as with idolatry, Protestantism identical with truth, law, and liberty; whose highest boast was that they were free-born Englishmen; beheld all which justified that boast either stealthily filched or snatched from them with open violence. Faithful preachers of the gospel were silenced, imprisoned, driven into exile. While avowed Popery spread rapidly, and doctrines undistinguishable from those of Rome took possession of the Church of England, her pulpits resounded with the monstrous doctrines of the unlimited prerogative of kings, and the duty of passive obedience. No man could call his goods, his home, his speech, his conscience his own. Even the safety-valve of flight to America was being screwed down. On the first of May, 1638, two years before the meeting of the Long Parliament, an order of Council restrained from sailing eight vessels lying in the Thames bound for New England, and filled with Puritan families, among whom (according to the authorities cited by Neal) were John Hampden, Arthur Haselrigge, and Oliver Cromwell. Emigration to New England was prohibited without special licence, the royal reason for this new piece of tyranny being, "Because the people of New England were factious and unworthy of any support from hence, in regard to the great disorders and want of government among them, whereby many that have been well affected to the Church

of England have been prejudiced in their estates by them." *

In these terrible straits men were driven to their knees for comfort and to their Bible for light. Finding that the Divine right of Monarchy meant the right to tax, pillage, imprison, degrade, brand, mutilate, in defiance of all law; and that the Divine right of Episcopacy meant the right to silence the gospel, to restore Popery, to use the strong arm of the State against all liberty of conscience, and to set up a power calling itself spiritual, even greater than the Crown, men began to scrutinize the proof of these rights, and to search into the foundations of authority and liberty both civil and religious. The appeal to Scripture as the sole and sufficient oracle of Divine truth had created the Reformation and made England Protestant. The widespread private study of the Scriptures in our own tongue had carried the Reformation a stage further in the views and desires of the most earnest and religious portion of the nation: in other words, had made England to a large extent Puritan. It was but a single step onward in the same path when men turned to their Bibles for the true doctrine of the Church, and easily discovered that the hierarchy—in other words, the whole episcopal church-system above and beyond the presbyter, pastor, or parish clergyman—was a human invention: a fungous growth, concealing and stifling the true life of the Church. A complete reformation, they saw, must mean the restoration of the church-system of the apostles, in its primitive simplicity and purity; the sweeping away of that ecclesiastical fabric of which OWEN wrote:

“Contrary to the light of the gospel which shone among us, the will and fancies of men, under the name of order, decency, and the authority of the church (a chimæra that none knew what it was, nor

* Neal, ii. 287.

wherein the power did consist, nor in whom abide) were imposed on men in the ways and worship of God."

II.

English Independency in the seventeenth century was that 'one step onward' of which I have spoken; or at least the attempt to take that step. It was its ill-fortune to be early identified in public estimation with the writings of ROBERT BROWNE, a clergyman and schoolmaster of good family, who, having suffered for Puritanism, fled to the Netherlands, and became pastor of a Congregational church of Dutch emigrants who had returned from England to Zeeland. He published in 1582 a work unfolding the principles of Congregationalism—especially the master-principle of appeal to the New Testament as the sole authority in church government. He was a man of undoubted ability, but of turbulent, imperious temper and doubtful morals. Having quarrelled with his people and retreated to Scotland, he afterwards returned to England, where the influence of his noble relations not only protected him but obtained for him a good living in Northamptonshire. He paid a curate for discharging the duty, and at the age of eighty died in Northampton jail, having been imprisoned, not for conscience' sake, but for striking a constable.*

JOHN ROBINSON, in his memorable farewell address to the Leyden emigrants, about to embark on board the *Mayflower* said: "I must also advise you to abandon, avoid, and shake off the name of Brownists. It is a mere nickname, and a brand for the making religion and the profession thereof odious to the Christian world."†

Robinson himself is called by Neal "the father of the Independents."‡

* Fuller, B. ix., § 6; Hanbury, i. 18 ff.

† Neal, ii. 111.

‡ Ibid. p. 43.

"He set out," says Neal, "upon the most rigid principles; but by conversing with Dr. Ames and other learned men, he became more moderate; and though he always maintained the lawfulness and necessity of separating from those reformed churches among which he lived, yet he did not deny them to be true churches."

Robinson's own words are :

"We acknowledge those reformed churches for true and genuine we hold communion with them as far as we can ; those among us who understand the Dutch language frequent their sermons ; and we administer the Lord's Supper to such of their members as are known to us and desire it occasionally."

HENRY JACOB, a zealous Puritan clergyman and Oxford graduate, who had published two books against the Brownists, having fled to Holland from the persecution of Bancroft (then bishop of London), came under Robinson's influence, and espoused the views he had formerly denounced. He returned to England, "and having imparted his design of setting up a separate congregation, like those in Holland, to the most learned Puritans of those times . . . it was not condemned as unlawful, considering there was no prospect of a national reformation." He called his friends together and

"having obtained their consent to unite in Church fellowship, for obtaining the ordinances of Christ in the purest manner, they laid the foundation of the first Independent or Congregational Church in England in the following manner:—having observed a day of solemn fasting and prayer for a blessing upon their undertaking, towards the close of the solemnity each of them made open confession of their faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; and then standing together they joined hands and solemnly covenanted with each other in the presence of Almighty God to walk together in God's ways and ordinances according as he had already revealed or should further make known to them. Mr. Jacob was then chosen pastor by the suffrage of the brotherhood, and others were appointed to the office of deacons, with fasting and prayer and imposition of hands." *

This was in the year 1616. In calling Mr. Jacob's

* Neal, ii. 92.

church the first Congregational church in England, Neal is of course leaving out of his reckoning those earlier but evanescent societies in the reign of Elizabeth, to which in strictness that distinction pertains. Mr. Hanbury claims for Henry Jacob the high honour (which Dr. Stoughton seems to concede to the Baptist, Leonard Busher, and which has also other claimants) of being the first to plead for freedom of conscience.* The fact is that those who about the same time learned and preached this great truth were fellow-students in the same hard school. "The only good effect," says Daniel Neal, "which persecution hath ever produced, has been opening the eyes of men to see the iniquity of it, and raising in their hearts an abhorrence of it." Some twenty years later (in or about 1644) two Baptist writers published books in which it was boldly maintained

"that it is the will and command of God, that since the coming of His Son, a permission of the most Paganish, Jewish, Turkish, or anti-Christian consciences and worships be granted to all men in all matters; that the doctrine of persecution in case of conscience, maintained by Calvin, Beza, Cotton, and the ministers of New England, is guilty of all the blood of the souls crying for vengeance under the altar."

And Parliament was besought

"to allow public protection to private as well as public congregations; to review and repeal the laws against the Separatists, to permit a freedom of the press to any man who writes nothing scandalous or dangerous to the State; to prove themselves loving fathers to all good men; and so to invite equal assistance and affection from all."†

It is difficult for us, to whom these views appear so

* Jacob's *Humble Supplication for Toleration* was published in 1609; Busher's *Religious Peace, or a Plea for Liberty of Conscience*, in 1614; *Persecution for Religion Judged and Condemned*, ascribed to Thomas Helwise, Baptist Minister in London, in 1615. (Hanbury, i. 224. Neal, v. 143.)

† Neal, v. 142.

eminently Christian and reasonable, to understand or even imagine the howl of pious indignation they evoked, not from the prelatical party, with whom persecution was an ancient heirloom, but from the men (or their representatives) who in Scotland had risen in fury to drive Charles's bishops, prayer-book, caps, surplices, and total church apparatus, across the border; and who in England had drawn the sword in the name of liberty and religion, but were not prepared to allow Independents to interpret this as meaning liberty of religion.

On Nov. 5, 1640, two days after the opening of the Long Parliament, the Rev. Dr. Robert Baillie wrote from Newcastle (then occupied by the Scottish army)—

"At our presbytery, after sermon, both our noblemen and ministers in one voice thought meet that not only Mr. Alexander Henderson, but also Mr. Robert Blair, Mr. George Gillespie, and I, should all three for divers ends go to London; Mr. R. Blair, to satisfy the minds of many in England who love the Way of New England better than that of Presbyteries used in our Church; I for convincing of that prevalent faction against which I have written; Mr. Gillespie for the crying down of the English ceremonies, for which he has written; and all four to preach, by turns, to our Commissioners."

A few months later (Jan. 29th and March 15th) he writes from London :

"The godly here meet oft in private houses, for in public they dare not; fast and pray, and hear gracious sermons, for whole days, sundry times in the week. . . . In the adverse party we hear of little devotion in the best of them." "All the English ministers of Holland who are for New England Way are now here; how strong their party will be here is diversely reported; they are all on good terms with us. Our only considerable difference will be about the jurisdiction of synods and presbyteries. As for Brownists and Separatists of many kinds here, they mislike them well near as much as we; of these there is no considerable party. Our questions with them of the New Way we hope to get determined to our mutual satisfaction, if we were rid of Bishops; and till then we have agreed to speak nothing of anything wherein we differ. . . . All of them are learned, discreet, and zealous men, well seen in cases of conscience. It were all the pities in the world that they and we should differ in anything, especially in that

one which, albeit very small in speculation, yet in practice of very huge consequence; for making every congregation an absolute and independent Church over which presbyteries and general assemblies have no power of censure, but only of charitable admonition. My wit sees not how incontinent a national Church should not fall into unspeakable confusion, as I am confident the goodness of God will never permit so gracious men to be the occasions of, let be the authors."*

The charity of the worthy Scot was sincere, but it was of that kind which prefers that all concessions should come from the other side. His hopes concerning those "learned, zealous, discreet and gracious men" were doomed to be sorely disappointed, and his patience wofully tried, by the stand which "the Dissenting Brethren" made for liberty in the Westminster Assembly. But when universal freedom of conscience was openly claimed, his indignation knew no measure. "Liberty of conscience," he writes five years later, "and toleration of all or any religion is so prodigious an impiety that this religious Parliament cannot but abhor the very naming of it. Whatever may be the opinions of John Goodwin, of Mr. Williams, and some of that stamp, yet Mr. Burroughes in his late *Irenicum* upon many unanswerable arguments explodes that abomination."†

In this reference Dr. Baillie seems to have seriously misapprehended his author. Burroughes says:

"The magistrate cannot command every good thing, nor punish every evil. The abstruse controversies in religion come not under the cognisance of the magistrate as a magistrate; only such things as are against the rules of common justice and equity, and the common light of Christianity where he is to govern Christians; for he is to enjoin and punish such things only as, if he were not, the community of people which sets him up ought to enjoin and punish, for he hath his power from them. Certainly, conscience is a very tender thing; and as men must take heed how they offer violence to their own consciences, so to the consciences of others; it is such a thing as is not

* Hanbury, ii. 55-6.

† Ibid. iii. 127.

in subjection to any creature in heaven or earth, only to God Himself. But for all this, the Devil must not be let alone though he be got into men's consciences. God hath appointed no city of refuge for him; if he flies to men's consciences, as Joab did to the horns of the altar, he must be fetched from thence, or fallen upon there."

He goes on to argue that errors destructive to the State must be repressed, such as the doctrine that a foreign power can dispose of the English Crown and set subjects free from allegiance. He admits that, "though such as are not Christians cannot by violence be compelled to profess Christian religion, yet notwithstanding any plea of their conscience, they may be restrained, and that by violence, if other means will not do it, from an open blaspheming Christ and the Scriptures, or doing any acts of open dishonour to them." And he deems it not unfair that those whose conscientious opinions disabled them from serving the State—as in the case of those who deem military service unlawful—should be "denied many privileges and accommodations that are granted to others who venture their lives for the preservation of the State."

After some other instances, instructive and perhaps amusing, did my limits permit me to quote them, Burroughes comes to the question of "absolute liberty for all religions." He lays down two axioms: (1) "That the only way the Church hath to keep down error or heresies is spiritual; as for other means, they are extrinsical to the Church." (2) "The virtue of spiritual power works not upon the outward man, but by its prevailing upon conscience; therefore, so far as men are conscientious, so far it works, and no further." He then discusses the means which "they who are for a Congregational-Way" acknowledge and employ in the exercise of Church censures, distinguishing six successive methods. "But our brethren say there is one means more in their Way than the Congregational-Way hath, that is, if the six former will not work, then Synods may deliver to Satan! In this very thing

lies the very knot of the controversy." He adds, further on, these noble words: "We sail up to our Brethren so far as we can see the line of Truth, and beyond it we dare not venture in the least. . . . The way to peace is not the necessity of coming up one to another because the thing is little; but the loving and peaceable and brotherly carriage of one towards another, because the difference is but small."*

Contemporary with the *Irenicum* of Jeremiah Burroughes was a book which made no small sensation, and blazed through three editions in two months; *Gangræna*, by "Thomas Edwards, Minister of the Gospel." This author has been described as "rather a personification of bigotry than a human being." He classifies prevailing "errors, heresies, blasphemies," under "sixteen heads or sorts of Sectaries," giving the Independents the place of honour at the head.

"A Toleration," he says, "is the grand design of the Devil; his masterpiece and chief engine he works by, at this time, to uphold his tottering kingdom. It is the most compendious, ready, sure way to destroy all religion, lay all waste, and bring in all evil; it is a most transcendent, catholic, and fundamental evil for this kingdom of any that can be imagined. As original sin is the most fundamental sin, having the seed and spawn of all in it, so a Toleration hath all errors in it and all evils."

After much more to the same effect, this prophet of woe exclaims:

"O! sad and woful effects of Independency! As in all places wherever it hath been set up—as New England, Rotterdam, Amsterdam, Bermudas—so in England, where within these four years it hath produced among persons accounted religious more damnable heresies, strange opinions, fearful divisions, looseness of life and manners, than ever have been in all the Reformed Churches of the Presbyterial Way above fourscore years. Independency in England is the mother, nurse, and patroness of all other errors. . . . Let us, therefore, fill

* Hanbury, iii. 108-112.

all Presses, cause all pulpits to ring, and so possess Parliament, City, and whole Kingdom against the sects, and of the evil of Schism and a Toleration, that we may no more hear of a Toleration, nor of Separated Churches, being hateful names in the Church of God.”*

If these were the mere ravings of a fanatical bigot, labouring to spur the flagging zeal of his party, they might be passed by in silent contempt. But the evidence is only too abundant that what is peculiar to Edwards is simply his outrageous violence of language; his sentiments are those of the Presbyterian party. The weekly meeting of London ministers at Sion College, in a letter to the Westminster Assembly (January, 1646) exhorted them “to oppose with all their might the great Diana of the Independents, and not suffer their new establishment to be strangled in the birth by a lawless toleration.”† The “ministers of Lancashire” published a paper in 1648 in which they compare toleration to putting a cup of poison in a child’s hand, or a sword in a madman’s, letting loose madmen with firebrands, and appointing “a city of refuge in men’s consciences for the devil to fly to.” Forty-three Warwickshire ministers published a similar declaration.‡ Pamphlets to the same purpose swarmed from the press—among them, strange to say, one from the pen of Prynne. In May, 1646, a week or two after the king’s flight from Oxford to the Scotch army, the City of London presented an urgent remonstrance to Parliament, reminding them that the Covenant bound them to suppress heresy and schism, and desiring that all separate congregations should be suppressed, and persons disaffected to the Presbyterian government approved by Parliament be disqualified from offices of public trust. The General Assembly of Scotland wrote a letter of thanks to the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and

* Hanbury, iii. 157 ff.

† Neal, iii. 262.

‡ Ibid.

Common Council, and addressed similar exhortations to Parliament and to the Westminster Assembly.*

The Independents took alarm, and a counter-petition was presented, with thousands of signatures, praying that Parliament "would never suffer the free-born people of this kingdom to be enslaved upon what pretext soever, nor any other to share with the Parliament, or to prescribe to them in the government or power of this nation."†

Truly, the "difference" about which good Dr. Robert Baillie had six years earlier expressed his anxiety was grown to be very "considerable" indeed. It went, in fact, as deep as the very root of the civil war. Milton, in his caustic lines *On the new Forcers of Conscience*, sums up the situation in one line, as true as terse—

"New Presbyter is but old Priest writ large."

Independents, and all whom the Presbyterians classed with them as 'Sectaries,' found themselves face to face with the question, whether in signing the Covenant they had bartered liberty for the help of the Scottish sword, and whether the end for which so much toil, treasure, and blood had been freely spent was merely the pulling down of one tyranny in order to set up another, as much more hateful as the tyranny of the obscure many is more detestable than the tyranny of the exalted few.

The result was what no one in England could have dreamed of when the Long Parliament met—to compel Independents to array themselves as a political party, and to make that Party for a brief space the supreme power in the realm.

III.

The Church principles which in the seventeenth century became known under the twin names of Inde-

* Neal, iii. 276.

† Whitelock.

pendency and Congregationalism were in part a reaction :—a struggling protest on behalf of liberty of conscience, and of spirituality, or, to use a plainer word, *reality* of Christian life and fellowship—against the oppression, first, of Prelacy, secondly, of Presbytery, thirdly, of Erastianism. By this last term is meant that state control over religion which the Long Parliament so stiffly asserted, and which is needful even in the interest of liberty as long as religion is established by law. We must not wonder if Independency, so far as it was a reaction, displayed the besetting faults of reaction—one-sidedness, exaggeration, narrowness, violence. Conscious how far we ourselves fall short of our own ideal, we need not claim superhuman perfection for our godly forefathers. Only, comparing their lives and writings with those of members of other Christian communions, we may be allowed to say, “Let him that is without sin cast the first stone.”

But the vital force of Congregationalism lay not in reaction, protest, or negation, but in its firm grip on positive truth. Like every great movement, it had an idea at the heart of it, the secret of its inspiration. This idea was the restoration of the Apostolic Church Polity : Christ’s Church reformed on Christ’s model.

It may be true enough that had the Church of England in James I.’s time been thoroughly purged from all roots and relics of Popery, and enjoyed a moderate degree of liberty, men like John Robinson and Henry Jacob would never have been moved to study the teaching of the New Testament concerning the Church, to disinter the buried form of primitive Church polity, and seek to rebuild the ruined Temple on its original foundation. But, once engaged in this study, they could not fail to discover those grand outlines which the impartial critic and historian of whatever party must recognize. That the first Christian Churches

were purely voluntary brotherhoods, drawn and held together by the force of personal conviction, and by the influence of the Spirit of God; that their only funds were free-will offerings; their relation to the State a variable experience of bitter hostility alternating with scornful neglect; that the bishops of Ephesus and Philippi—and by analogy of other churches—were identical with presbyters or pastors; that the Church in each town was a complete society in itself, immediately responsible (as the letters to the Seven Churches especially show) to “the Chief Shepherd,” the Lord Jesus Christ Himself—these are historical facts as plain on the face of the record as that Paul was an apostle, or that Peter received the power of the keys. With any one who denies this, controversy is useless.

Against the *jure divino* theory, therefore (itself a modern invention), either of prelatic Episcopacy or of “the Presbyterian Way,” the position of Independency may fairly be deemed impregnable. The fiction that Timothy and Titus were diocesan bishops, from whom the order of bishops, as distinct from and superior to presbyters, is derived in unbroken succession, cannot stand for a moment against the plain fact that the second century knows nothing of such bishops, but only of bishops of particular Churches, each city or town having still its separate Church. With this fiction the Divine right of Episcopacy melts into air.

The case is by no means equally clear and simple if either Episcopacy or Presbyterianism in its turn challenge the *jus Divinum* of Independency, and take its stand on liberty. The position is clearly intelligible and reasonably tenable, that the New Testament nowhere lays down as permanent law that Church-system which it records as historic fact; that in this wise abstinence from positive enactment the Divine Head of the Church has purposely

left a wide margin of liberty and elastic adaptation and circumstance and growth ; and that therefore neither a moderate Episcopacy such as that which in fact grew up in the age immediately succeeding the apostles (if not in their life-time) nor even an elaborate and complex system of presbyteries, synods, provincial and general assemblies (if adopted by the free will and judgment of the churches) ought to be condemned as contrary to the will of Christ or the fundamental constitution of the Church Catholic.

Unhappily, as the Episcopalians in the pride of their power utterly scorned any such temperate common-sense view as this, and would be content with nothing short of a Divine right, which it was blasphemy to question and schism and rebellion to oppose ; so the Presbyterians, when power seemed passing into their hands, would acknowledge no unity but uniformity ; no liberty but their own ; no scriptural Church model but that which they had set up in Scotland, and strained every nerve to force upon England.

Considering that (according to one of the quaint old current Puritan sayings) “ the best of men are but men at the best,” and how strong is the principle of recoil in human nature, one cannot be surprised if, among the Independents of that age, or of the after time, were to be found those who repaid bigotry with bigotry, and valued their principles more as personal conviction than as Catholic truth ; more as dissent from legal conformity than as conformity to apostolic rule. So much the more refreshing and instructive is it to read the temperate and catholic language in which Independents like Jeremiah Burroughes—one of the “ Five Dissenting Brethren ” in the Westminster Assembly—plead for Christian unity as well as liberty.

“ Is it Thy mind, O blessed Saviour, that one man who conceives himself to understand the truth—and that it may be rightly—compel another to his judgment? And dost Thou also require that we must

not bring our judgment to our Brethren's till Thy light brings them? How then is it possible that we should be at peace one with another? . . . We know fire is beaten out by striking the flint. Although differences be very sad, yet the truth that comes to light by them may recompense the sadness. . . . But do not men in a Congregational-Way urge upon others their own conceptions and practices according to the power they have as much as any? For if men will not enter into covenant, if they hold another kind of judgment in the Church differing from them, they will not receive them nor communicate with them? I would all our controversy lay here . . . Whosoever doth as you say cannot be justified in so doing. Some men, it may be through an earnest desire of promoting what they conceived to be the mind of Christ, have been too rigid in their dealings with their Brethren. What hath been said will show the evil of their practice as well as of others." *

Burroughes published his *Irenicum* in the seventh year of the Long Parliament. A year previous to the meeting of that Parliament (1639) "the elders of the churches in New England" sent a reply to "a letter of many ministers in Old England," requesting the judgment of these reverend brethren in New England concerning Nine Positions. This reply was afterwards published, with the original letter, and with a rejoinder, the editors taking care to inform their readers that "these differences betwixt the loving brethren of Old England and New had not been made thus notorious if some who cry up the Church-way in New England had not been found to blow them abroad to the world." † It must be admitted that the rigid ecclesiasticism of these New England pastors bears a stronger likeness to that of Episcopacy and Presbyterianism than we could wish. Their reply to the first query concerning the lawfulness of joining in "a stinted form of prayer and set Liturgy" is very grudging and wary. Having indicated their objection to set forms in general, and admitted that some among them hold "all set forms of prayer invented by men of another age or congregation, and prescribed to

* Hanbury, iii. 113.

† Ibid. ii. 23.

their Brethren to be read out of a book for the prayers of the Church, as 'images or imaginations of men, forbidden in the Second Commandment,' " they conclude that

"if the question be of joining in some few select prayers read by an able and painful minister out of that Book; as on the one side we are very tender of imputing sin to the men that so join; so on the other side we are not without fear that such joining may be found to be unlawful; unless it may appear that the Ministers with whom the people have communion in reading those prayers do neither give any scandal by reading of them, nor give unlawful honour to a thing abused to idolatry and superstition, nor do suffer themselves to be sinfully limited in the reading of them." *

Concerning the third and fourth questions, which refer to Baptism and the Lord's Supper, after laying down rules and cautions concerning the admission of members of different Churches, they say:

"Spiritual communion, in prayers, holy conferences, and other religious actions of like nature, we maintain with all godly persons though they be not in Church order; but Church communion we hold only with Church members; admitting to fellowship of the Seals the known and approved and orderly recommended members of any true Church; but into fellowship of the Censures, admittance of Members, and choice of Officers, only the Members of that particular Church whereof they and we, any of us, stand members." †

"Indeed, the 'keys' are given to the whole Church, yet the exercise and dispensation of them in this, as well as in other particulars, is concredited to the Ministers, who are called to be 'stewards of the mysteries of God.' And no Church office can be orderly performed by any but one that is called thereunto; nor will God vouchsafe His presence and blessing—whereupon all spiritual efficacy depends—in an ordinance dispensed, but when it is dispensed by those whom He hath ordained and appointed thereunto." ‡

"None have power to dispense the Seals, but they that are called to the office of Ministry; and no man can be so called till first there be a Church to call him, seeing the power of calling Ministers is given by Christ unto the Church." §

They hold "no such 'indelible character' imprinted

* Hanbury, ii. 26.

† Ibid. p. 27.

‡ Ibid. p. 29.

§ Ibid. pp. 31, 32.

upon a Minister, but that the ministry ceasing, the Minister ceaseth also." Nevertheless, if a Church "without cause, or sufficient weighty cause, rashly or wilfully set aside whom Christ hath set over them, and whom they so solemnly called, and promised before the Lord to submit unto, . . . it is doubtless a very great wrong unto the Minister, and sin against Christ Himself." And such a pastor, though deposed, "seeing it is done not by Christ but by the Church without Christ," they consider "doth yet still remain a minister of Christ." *

Rigid as these views are compared with those prevailing among our Churches at the present day—views which we glory in as large, enlightened, and charitable, but which those stern forefathers of ours would have condemned as utterly lax and unscriptural; perilously as in some points these deliverances (and the arguments by which they are maintained and expounded) approach those views of Church power and official authority in which the dogma of sacramental salvation has its roots, and from which persecution itself springs; yet there is a genuine ring of Christian brotherhood in the appeal which these stiff old New Englanders "of the Congregational-Way" make to their English brethren.

"In the meanwhile, we entreat you in the Lord not to suffer such apprehensions to lodge in your minds which you intimate in your Letters; as if we justified the ways of rigid separation which sometimes, amongst you, we have formerly borne witness against, and so build again the things we have destroyed. You know they separate from your Congregations as no Churches; from the Ordinances dispensed by you as mere antichristian; and from yourselves as no visible Christians. But we profess unfeignedly; we separate from the corruptions which we conceive to be left in your Churches, and from such ordinances administered therein as we fear are not of God but of men; and for yourselves, we are so far from separating as from no visible Christians as that you are, under God, in our hearts—if the

* Hanbury, ii. 38.

Lord would suffer it—to live and die together. And we look at sundry of you as men of that eminent growth in Christianity, that if there be any visible Christians under heaven, amongst you are the men which for these many years have been written in your foreheads ‘Holiness to the Lord;’ which we speak not to prejudice any truth, which ourselves are here taught and called to profess; but we still believe, though personal Christians may be eminent in their growth of Christianity, yet Churches had still need to grow from apparent defects to purity, and from reformation to reformation, age after age, till the Lord have utterly abolished Antichrist ‘with the breath of His mouth,’ and ‘the brightness of His coming,’ to the full and clear revelation of all His holy truth, especially touching the ordering of His house and public worship.” *

In 1643 was published a tract of some thirty pages quarto, entitled, “AN APOLOGETICAL NARRATION humbly submitted to the Honourable Houses of Parliament. By Thomas Goodwin, Philip Nye, Sidrach Simpson, Jeremiah Burroughes, William Bridge.” Having referred to the time when their convictions regarding the superstitions prevailing in the Church of England, and protests against them exposed them to “violence and persecution,” the only refuge from which was in exile, which latter, say they, “we did the rather choose,” they relate how, in their exile, they were led to study “the positive part of Church worship and government” as exemplified in “those primitive Churches recorded in the New Testament:” “We resolved not to take up our religion by or from any party; and yet to approve and hold fast whatsoever is good in any, though neversomuch differing from us; yea, opposite to us.” Concerning the congregations in which they were themselves converted, and formerly exercised their ministry, they earnestly disdain “any other thought, much less opinion, but that multitudes of the assemblies and parochial congregations thereof were the true churches and body of Christ; and the ministry a true ministry; much

* Hanbury, ii. 21, 22.

less did it ever enter into our hearts to judge them ‘anti-christian.’ We saw, and cannot but see, that by the same reason the churches abroad, in Scotland, Holland, &c., though more reformed, yet for their mixture must be in like manner judged no churches also! We always have professed . . . and when ourselves had least, yea no hopes of even so much as visiting our own land again in peace and safety to our persons, that we both did and would hold a communion with them as the churches of Christ.”* Having expounded their Church principles and referred to misapprehensions and calumnies to which they had been exposed, they say :

“That proud and insolent title of ‘Independency’ was affixed to us as our claim, the very sound of which conveys to all men’s apprehensions the challenge of an exemption of all churches from all subjection and dependence; or rather a trumpet of defiance against whatever power spiritual or civil: which we do abhor and detest. Or else the odious name of ‘Brownism’ together with all their opinions . . . must needs be owned by us: although, upon the very first declaring our judgments in the chief and fundamental point of all Church Discipline and likewise since, it hath been acknowledged that we differ much from them. . . . We believe the truth to lie and consist in a *middle way* between that which is falsely charged on us, ‘Brownism,’ and that which is the contention of these times, the ‘Authoritative Presbyterian Government in all the subordination and proceedings of it.”†

The modest petition which, in conclusion, these “Dissenting Brethren” present, is to be allowed to obtain “a subsistence, be it the poorest and meanest,” in their native land, with “a latitude to some lesser differences, with peaceableness; as not knowing where else, with safety, health, and livelihood, to set our feet on earth.”‡

IV.

“The INDEPENDENTS,” writes JOHN MILTON (in his

* Hanbury, ii. 223, 224.

† Ibid. pp. 228, 229.

‡ Ibid. pp. 230.

'*Defence of the People of England*,' chap. x.), "were the only men who from first to last kept to their point, and knew what use to make of their victory. They refused (and wisely, in my opinion) to make him king again, being then an enemy who, when he was their king, had made himself their enemy: nor were they ever the less averse to a peace, but they very prudently dreaded a new war, or a perpetual slavery under the name of peace." "You everywhere concede," he says to his anonymous opponent (*Second 'Defence'*), "that the Independents were superior, not in number but in discipline and courage. Hence I contend they well deserved the superiority which they acquired; for nothing is more agreeable to the order of nature, or more for the interest of mankind, than that the less should yield to the greater, not in numbers but in wisdom and in virtue."

The transformation of the English Independents, within ten years, from a despised ecclesiastical sect to a compact and victorious political party is one of the most astonishing and instructive facts in our national history; a standing witness to the truth, that in the life of a nation as of an individual, moral, not material forces are the most powerful. We must not exaggerate the marvel by speaking as though the victorious soldiers who called the King to answer with his head for his treason against the Nation, and suppressed the remnant of the Long Parliament, were precisely the same persons who ten or a dozen years before were political nonentities. They were the pupils of the time. The victors of Naseby, Dunbar, and Worcester were men whose religion and politics had been welded together in the white heat of battle. "In the terrible struggle against Charles," says Mr. Green, "individual conviction became a stronger force than religious tradition. . . . The shock of war had broken the bonds of custom, and given a violent impulse to the freest thought"

(p. 236). Men who joined this spirit of free thought and personal conviction with earnest godliness and intense faith in the Bible, naturally became Independents. The magical spell which transformed Independency from a purely religious and ecclesiastical movement, denouncing with fervent zeal the intrusion of secular power into Christ's kingdom, into a political movement, wielding the sword and seizing the sceptre, was nothing else than an unquenchable love of liberty—of civil liberty for its own sake, and yet more for what these men held dearer still—liberty of conscience. It was not so much that the Independents were the only lovers of liberty, as that the stream of events carried true lovers of liberty to the side of Independency. At the meeting of the Long Parliament, all the members, by order of the House, were required to take the Communion as members of the Church of England.* The expulsion of the bishops from the House of Lords, the execution of Archbishop Laud, even the total abolition of the entire episcopal system, were measures inspired by no ecclesiastical zeal for either Presbyterianism or Independency, but by the conviction that the freedom and safety of the nation could in no other way be secured. Lord Falkland, in the debate on the *Root and Branch Petition*, although pleading against the abolition of episcopacy, charged the bishops and their adherents with being "betrayers of our rights and liberties." Lord George Digby, a zealous Royalist, pleading on the same side, confessed that when he considered the insolence of the prelates—"how their vengeance has been so hard as if it were meant no generation, no degree, no complexion of mankind should escape it;" when he saw how they claimed not only St. Peter's spiritual sword, "but the material one too, and the right to cut off ears," he felt "ready

* Neal, ii. 373.

to cry with the loudest of the fifteen thousand, ‘Down with them to the ground!’” When these things were said by the friends of the bishops, pleading against their utter annihilation, we need not wonder if the belief daily gathered strength among Englishmen that Episcopacy was a plant not of God’s planting, which must be plucked up “root and branch.”

In the second summer of the war, things looked so dark for the Parliamentary cause that, under the guidance of that master-spirit, *Pym*, it was resolved to appeal to Scotland for aid. Nothing is more significant as to the relations of the Church to the State in Scotland at this crisis than the fact that the appeal of the English Parliament was made to the General Assembly of the Scottish Kirk. Sir Henry Vane and his fellow-commissioners were the bearers of a letter urgently entreating the Assembly “to stir up that nation to send some competent forces in aid of this Parliament and Kingdom, against the many armies of the Popish and Prelatical party and their adherents.” * The price of Scottish help was the Covenant—or, as Sir Henry Vane prevailed with them to style it, “The Solemn League and Covenant.” “We had hard enough debates,” says Baillie. “The English were for a civil LEAGUE, we for a religious COVENANT. . . . They were, more than we could assent to, for keeping of a door open in England to Independency. Against this we were peremptory” (p. 201). On the 25th September a scene was enacted in St. Margaret’s Church, Westminster, unique in English history. The House of Commons and the members of the Assembly of Divines, with hands uplifted to heaven, swore and then subscribed to the Covenant; a day or so later it was taken by the Lords; and on the following Sunday all the inhabitants of London and Westminster were required to take

* Hanbury, ii. 200.

it. The whole nation were enjoined to take it, with the least possible delay, and with the utmost religious solemnity. Richard Baxter, however, tells us that he would not suffer his own congregation to take it, and that he prevented its being taken generally in Worcestershire, the city of Worcester excepted.

The Scotch army did not cross the border till three months later (January, 1644). Sore was the impatience and longing with which its coming was expected by good Dr. Baillie and his brethren; not as the champion of English liberty, but as a help to rivet on English necks the yoke of Presbyterian uniformity. Soon after taking his seat in the Westminster Assembly, he writes that their "only considerable difficulty" will be with Independency, "wherewith we purpose not to meddle in haste, *till it please God to advance our army*, which we expect will much assist our arguments." * "In the time of this anarchy," he says in another letter, "the divisions of people do much increase. The Independent party grows; but the Anabaptists more, and the Antinomians most. The Independents being most able men, and of great credit, fearing nothing less than banishment from their native country if Presbyteries were erected, are watchful that no conclusion be taken for their prejudice." "It was my advice . . . to eschew a public rupture with the Independents *till we were more able for them*" (p. 230). In the following Spring (1644) he writes: "The Independents have so managed their affairs that of the officers and soldiers in Manchester's army, certainly also with the General's, † and as I hear in Waller's likewise, more than two parts are for them, and those of the far most resolute and confident men for the Parliament party. Judge ye if we had not need of our friends' help" (p. 433). After

* Hanbury, ii. 219.

† Lord Essex.

Marston Moor he writes: "Blessed be God for evermore that has looked down upon us all in that glorious 2nd of July! We were both grieved and angry that your Independents should have sent up Major Harrison to trumpet all over the City their own praises, to our prejudice, making all believe that Cromwell with his unspeakably valorous regiments had done all that service. . . . Our Independents continue and increase in their obstinacy." (*Q. d.*, in the Assembly.) "Much is added to their pride and hopes by their service at the Battle of York; albeit much of their valour's grounded on very false lies, prejudicial to God the Author and to us the true instruments of that day's honour" (p. 444). In September, he writes:

"This day, Cromwell has obtained an order of the House of Commons to refer to the Committee of both kingdoms the accommodation or toleration of the Independents; a high and unexpected order; yet by God's help we will make use of it contrary to the design of the procurers." . . . "The most of the officers in the General's and Waller's army have open and known quarrels. Manchester's is more pitifully divided. Manchester himself, a sweet meek man, permitted his Lieut.-general Cromwell to guide all the army at his pleasure. The man is a very wise and active head, universally well beloved as religious and stout. Being a known Independent, the most of the soldiers who loved new ways put themselves under his command. Our countryman Crawford was made Major-general of that army. This man proving very stout and successful got a great head with Manchester, and with all the army *that were not for sects*. The other party finding their designs marred by him, set themselves by all means to have him out of the way, that he being removed, they might frame the whole army to their devotion, and draw Manchester to them by persuasion, or else weary him out of his charge, that Cromwell might be general. This had been the Independents' great plot, by their army to counterbalance us, and overawe the Assembly and Parliament both to their ends" (p. 451).

"Their ends," my reverend friend! being simply that every Englishman should have liberty to worship God according to his own conscience, and to speak his mind like a free man.

“Sweet meek” men are admirable; but scarcely for leading armies and saving Commonwealths. Manchester wished to frighten Charles, as nurses frighten children, by pretending that he was going to beat him; but not to beat him in earnest. Cromwell, who saw that if war be not earnest, it is mere playing with men’s lives, made the sweet meek man’s hair stand on end by avowing that if he met the king in battle, he would fire his pistol at him “as at another.” Cromwell’s patience at last broke down. After the Battle of Newbury he denounced Manchester in Parliament, as either unfaithful or incompetent. Manchester recriminated by charging Cromwell with having avowed his desire to abolish the nobility of England, having “spoken contumeliously of the Scots’ intention of coming into England to establish their Church government, in which Cromwell said he would draw his sword against them; also, against the Assembly of Divines; and has threatened to make an army of Sectaries to extort by force both from King and Parliament what conditions they thought meet.” At all this, good Dr. Baillie trembles, but rejoices. “This fire was long under the embers: now it is broken out, we trust, in a good time.” His hope is that “that Darling of the Sectaries” may be removed from the army, the power of “that potent faction” broken, and “this high and mighty plot of the Independent party to have gotten an army for themselves under Cromwell,” and “of setting up themselves upon the ruins of all” gloriously defeated.*

It fell otherwise. As mostly happens in such cases, victory declared not for the sweet meek man, but for the strong rough man, who thought fighting the most real and earnest of businesses. After fierce debates, the Houses passed “the self-denying ordinance,” taking all military

* Hanbury, ii. 453.

command from members of either House. "This," writes Baillie, "is still more and more admired by some as a most wise, necessary, and heroic action; by others as the most rash, hazardous, and unjust action as ever Parliament did."* At all events, it seemed clear that Cromwell was now effectually got rid of. But Cromwell was found to be the one person who could not be thus summarily got rid of; the one man the army could not afford to part with, for the simple reason that he knew, as no other Englishman knew, how to fight and to lead an army to victory. Parliament found it necessary to except him for the present from the ordinance; and the time never came when he could be spared. In the Spring of 1645, Fairfax was appointed general of the new-modelled army. "But behind Fairfax stood Cromwell; and the principle on which Cromwell had formed his Ironsides was carried out on a larger scale in the New Model. The one aim was to get together 20,000 'honest men.'"+ The royalists, Whitelock tells us, looked with scorn on the New Model, nicknaming it "*the new noddle*." Baillie writes: "Their new-modelled army consists for the most part of raw, unexperienced pressed soldiers. Few of the officers are thought capable of their places. Many of them are Sectaries, or their confident friends. If they do great service, many will be deceived."‡

The reply to these scornful prophecies was the battle of NASEBY (June 14, 1645). The royal cause was irreparably ruined. The war lingered on into the following summer. But in September Prince Rupert surrendered Bristol; and in April Charles fled from Oxford, and surrendered himself to the Scottish army. In January, 1647, he was handed over to the English Parliament.

In the despatch to the Speaker of the House of Com-

* Hanbury, ii. 456. † Green, p. 289. ‡ Hanbury, pp. 549, 551.

mons, in which Cromwell sends word of the victory of Naseby, he writes :

"Honest men served you faithfully in this action. Sir, they are trusty ; I beseech you, in the name of God, not to discourage them. . . . He that ventures his life for the liberty of his Country, I wish he trust God for the liberty of his conscience, and you for the liberty he fights for." *

In like manner, in his despatch after the taking of Bristol, he writes :

"Sir, they that have been employed in this service know, that faith and prayer obtained this city for you : I do not say ours only, but of the people of God with you, and all England over. . . . Presbyterians, Independents, *all* have here the same spirit of faith and prayer, the same presence and answer ; they agree here, have no names of difference. Pity it is it should be otherwise anywhere ! All that believe have the same real unity, which is most glorious, because inward and spiritual, in the Body and to the Head. For being united in forms, commonly called uniformity, every Christian will for peace' sake study and do as far as conscience will permit. And for brethren, in things of the mind we look for no compulsion but that of light and reason. In other things, God has put the sword in the Parliament's hands, for the terror of evil-doers and the praise of them that do well. If any plead exemption from that, he knows not the Gospel. If any would wring that out of your hands, or steal it from you under what pretence soever, I hope they shall do it without effect." †

To these principles Cromwell continued true to the last. In his speech to that wonderful convention known as "the Little Parliament," and nicknamed "Barebones' Parliament"—unique in the history not only of England but of all lands, being a representative assembly selected on the principle that every member must be a God-fearing Christian ; "that there was in him faith in Jesus Christ and love to all His people and saints"—Cromwell says : "I mean, when I say 'the people of God,' I mean the *large* comprehension of them, under the several forms of godliness in this nation." In the same speech he says : "If I

* Carlyle, i. 215.

† Ibid. p. 230.

were to choose a servant, the meanest officer for the Army or Commonwealth, I would choose a godly man that hath principles ; especially where a trust is to be committed. Because I know *where to have* a man that hath principles." *

How any man, himself insincere and selfish at heart, whose religion was a compound of hypocrisy and fanaticism, could come by sentiments like these is for those to explain who take that view of Cromwell's character. For most thoughtful readers of the volumes in which Thomas Carlyle has built an immortal monument to the most maligned of English patriots, I suppose Cromwell's letters and speeches—most eloquent in their lack of eloquence, in the wrestling of thought with words, as of a soul thinking aloud, labouring to disburden itself—have exploded the fanatic-hypocrite theory. If not, it must be because people have before their minds only a grotesque, impossible paper-shadow of a man, like the Cromwell of Scott's *Woodstock*, not a real flesh-and-blood Englishman.

It does not follow that Oliver Cromwell was a blameless saint. You can scarcely find the symmetry of the palm with the fibre and girth of the oak ; the transparency of the flawless diamond with the tough strength of wrought iron ; the crystal purity and glassy smile of the sheltered tarn with the rush of the storm-swollen torrent. That colossal character had doubtless its errors, weaknesses, inconsistencies, as the mountain-peak has its rifts and mists, and glacier-clefts, though it is based on the eternal foundations God's hand has laid, and lifts its head into the sunlight of heaven.

Richard Baxter—that miraculous compound of bodily infirmity and spiritual power, who could say with St. Paul, " I die daily . . . nevertheless I live ; " who was a no less marvellous combination of narrowness with breadth,

* Carlyle, p. 213.

controversial keenness and strong personal prejudice with warm and large-hearted charity—draws a very severe portrait of Cromwell, though allowing that his piety was real. But of his administration of public affairs, he says :

“ For my part, I bless God who gave me even under an Usurper whom I opposed such liberty and advantage to preach His gospel with success, which I cannot have under a King to whom I have sworn and performed true subjection and obedience ; yea, which no age since the Gospel came into this Land did before possess, as far as I can learn from history. . . . Yea, and I shall add this much more for the sake of Posterity, that much as I have said and written against licentiousness in religion, and for the magistrates’ power in it ; and though I think that Land happy whose rulers use their authority for Christ, as well as for the civil peace ; yet in comparison with the rest of the world, I should think that Land happy that hath but bare liberty to be as good as they are willing to be. And if *countenance and maintenance* be but added to liberty, and tolerated errors and sects be but forced to *keep the peace*, and not to oppose the substantial of Christianity, I shall not hereafter much fear such toleration, nor despair that truth will bear down adversaries.” *

The breach—into the heart of which Baillie’s letters enable us to look so closely, between the Independents and the Presbyterians, the Army and the Parliament—that is, the indissoluble House of Commons, with which the City of London was closely allied—became ever wider, more hopelessly incurable. The King, whether in the hands of the Scots, the Parliament, or the Army, never surrendered his insane hope that by playing off one party against the other he might regain all he had lost and trample his enemies impartially underfoot. He possessed eminent abilities ; but he lacked the statesman’s ability to understand either the persons or the events he had to deal with, and the honest man’s ability to look singly at the matter in hand. He was devout and conscientious ; but neither in his religion nor in his morality was there a place for integrity and simple-hearted truth. His active intellect

* *Life*, p. 87.

was ever looking right and left, and trying to see round and behind the business before him, but seemed incapable of looking straight at it. His very virtues—his devotion to his queen and his loyalty to his church—helped to ruin him, because not only severed from, but displacing and hindering any loyalty to the laws and constitution of England, any care for the lives, freedom, desires, or happiness of his people; any glimmering of an idea that the Church of Christ is larger than the Church of England. Neither success nor adversity could teach him anything. In that last hour in which his dignity, courage, and piety did so much to intensify the horror which his death produced on all sides, and to surround his reign and character with a halo of unreal glory and unmerited enthusiasm, he could find no crime with which to reproach himself but that of having consented to the death of Strafford. To negotiate with him in the interest of national liberty and constitutional government was like endeavouring to build bridges and make roads on a quicksand.

When it was perceived that the cup of peace was being dashed from the lips of an exhausted and bleeding nation by the breaking out of the Second Civil War (A.D. 1648), a terrible murmur, not loud but deep, like the muffled roar of the coming tempest, arose in the army. Why should HE, the great delinquent, the real incendiary of the constitution, and author of England's miseries, escape the sword of justice? If it be a Divine law that "whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed," was there any patent of exemption for him through whom such torrents of English blood had been pitilessly made to flow, and, as it seemed, in vain? If high treason be a capital crime, to atone which so many of the noblest heads in England, generation after generation, have fallen under the axe of justice, what treason could be compared with His who had attempted the very life of English liberty, and

for eleven years had suppressed law, and suspended the ancient constitution of the realm ?

It is easy to sit aloft in judicial calm and condemn the series of strong measures by which the King's person was taken out of the Parliament's keeping, the Presbyterian party checkmated, the helpless lingering remnant of the House of Commons dispersed by the wrathful voice of General Oliver and the apparition of his "thirty musketeers ;" and the reins of power, else lying loose in the dust, grasped in the only hand that was strong enough to hold them. Easy it is, at this distance of time, calmly to judge, and impartially to condemn. But to sit apart and calmly judge is exactly what men cannot do when the ship is foundering ; when the dykes have burst and the sea is coming in ; when the powder magazine is catching fire. They have to act, how terrible soever may be the responsibility and tremendous the issues.

"Cromwell was a usurper." True. But who, in that violent upturning of all the foundations of the State, was anything else ? Strafford, when he subjected Ireland to military despotism, and bent all his transcendent ability and energy to carrying out the same policy of "Thorough" in England ? Laud, when he grasped the whole power of the Church, and extinguished at once Protestantism and freedom ? The King, when he treated the constitution as a fiction, and claimed Divine right to rule as absolute monarch ? The House of Commons, when, having revolutionized the constitution by the Act for making itself indissoluble, it seized the command of the army, navy, and fortresses, abolished the House of Lords, and exercised the whole sovereignty of the State ; or when it attempted by its mere will and pleasure to disband that victorious army of free-born Englishmen, the very pith of the Nation, who had drawn the sword not for the Long Parliament, the City of London, and the Presbyterian Covenant, but

for liberty ; and who thought—not without show of reason—that they, if any, were the true representatives of the English People ?

More especially is it easy to condemn—as men of all religious and political parties did condemn, and as eminent Independent writers have in after times condemned—the execution of the King. Any show of constitutional law, the case itself rendered impossible. There were precedents enough for deposing, imprisoning, and murdering English kings, but none for bringing a bad king to the bar of public justice. As far as constitutional law was concerned, the High Court of Justice might as well have been a court-martial. The one thing indispensable to give the execution the character of a great act of national justice, above and beyond all statutes or precedents, was wanting—namely, the consent of the Nation. The Nation was not asked to consent, and if it had been asked it would have refused. In spite of that wonderful ‘*Defence of the People of England*,’ wherewith Milton “made all Europe ring,” the People of England did not approve the deed. It turned out to be what politicians say is ‘worse than a crime—a mistake.’ It went far to soften men’s judgments towards Charles, and to blot out the memory of his enormous crimes. The Tyrant was forgotten in the Martyr. A new centre and spur were supplied for Royalist hopes in the person of the young prince, whom foreign powers recognized as the rightful heir to the throne, and in whom the Scottish Commissioners beheld “one of the most gentle, innocent, well-inclined princes that lives in the world ;” * his only serious fault apparently (in their judgment) being his unaccountable perversity in hesitating to take the Covenant. That solemn farce gone through, the Scots crowned the new king ; and the army that so

* Hanbury, iii. 378.

lately had entered England as friends and allies, had to be encountered by Cromwell and his Ironsides as deadly foes, and at Dunbar and Worcester driven into headlong ruin.

It is easy, I repeat, to condemn. But if we would judge the deed of those Englishmen justly, we must try to put ourselves in their place and see with their eyes. They believed that God had put into their hands the sword of victory for the deliverance of England; and that the sword of victory was the sword of justice. They thought it was their high mission to plant anew the tree of English liberty, so deep and firm that it could never be uprooted; and that its safety could best be ensured by a warning so awful that none should dare thereafter to lay on it a sacrilegious hand. They thought—and in this I think they judged rightly—that no crime can be so great, no treason so dangerous and inexcusable, as the attempt to subvert the laws and liberties of a nation by their crowned trustee and sworn guardian; and they inferred that God and man would approve if on such a traitor they had the courage to inflict a traitor's doom.

In reality, they rendered the Commonwealth impossible, and the Restoration inevitable. Another ten years rolled swiftly by. The sceptre, snatched from the iron hand of the Lord Protector by the only hand that was stronger—Death's—dropt of itself from the grasp of his successor. In a few months England, besotted with loyalty, was flinging her unsecured liberties into the lap of a Stuart king. It took another eighteen years for the nation thoroughly to learn its lesson and to undo—at least in the main—its folly.

With the fall of the Commonwealth, Independency or Congregationalism passed again into that cold shade of the tempest in which men gird their principles round their hearts more firmly, and are drawn closer to one another

and nearer to God. The Revolution of 1688 brought about that strange metamorphosis of English parties in which the descendants of the men who preached passive obedience engaged in treasonable intrigues to bring back by force of arms a race of pretenders, in whose family tyranny and Popery had been proved to be incurable hereditary diseases; and the descendants of the men who had beheaded a king and set up a Republic were found the most staunchly loyal supporters of the Protestant throne and of the House of Hanover. Bearing, as was their fathers' wont, the main brunt and stress of the battle, they won, inch by inch, the ground they have bequeathed to their children. The liberties for which our ancestors fought and suffered are become the commonplaces of constitutional law, not in one New England but in many.

Two hundred years are nearly complete since the landing of William of Orange, and the revival of English liberty. But the great schism in the Church of Christ in England is yet unhealed. The bishops still sit in the House of Lords—with what advantage to any great measure of justice or reform, political, ecclesiastical, social, or commercial history sadly records. The communion tables of the Established Church still stand not where Parliament and the Rubric commanded, but where Laud placed them—altarwise against the east end of the chancel. And the so-called 'Catholic' doctrines of Laud and his party are daily taught with fresh audacity from the pulpits of what is styled in that legal phraseology, which time and events so often turn into the severest sarcasm, "the Protestant Establishment."

English Protestantism has still need of Independency. And if there be truth in the lessons of history, English liberty cannot afford to part with Protestantism. The battle has to be fought out; though it can have but one ultimate issue. "The night is far spent; the day is at

hand." But the 'perfect day' seems yet far off. One by one, our strongest, swiftest, aptest torch-bearers are called out of the race. We must soon hand on the light to our children. But let us remember—let them remember—that the cause for which our forefathers went into voluntary exile, and died on the battle-field, or more painfully and bravely still in the dungeon, was not freedom of opinion, but freedom of conscience—freedom to follow Christ: not speculative truth, but Christ's holy gospel. The cause of Independency would not be won but lost, were every church in the world to become a separate self-governed community, electing its own pastors, deacons, and members, unless each church be a lighthouse, holding aloft, pure, clear, and bright, the light of the glorious gospel of Him who lived and died and rose from the dead that He might be Lord both of the dead and the living.

NOTE.

The following are the full titles of the works briefly cited in the foregoing lecture :

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[A later edition contains some passages suppressed in this.]

V.

*THE POLICY OF THE RESTORATION, AND
OF THE REIGN OF CHARLES THE
SECOND.*

BY

J. KENNEDY, D.D.

Contents of Lecture 5.

Death of Cromwell—Character of his son Richard—State of England—Principal parties: Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Independents—The Independents and liberty—Edward Hyde, Lord Clarendon—Dr. Gilbert Sheldon—The King and the Breda Declaration—The King and his niece Mary contrasted—Immediate occasion of the Restoration—Deeper causes,—Sir M. Hale attempts to obtain guarantees—Of little use if obtained—The Breda Declaration the basis of Charles' right to reign—The Worcester House Declaration—An old principle the evil genius of the Restoration—A century of Acts of Uniformity—The Corporation Act—Directed specially against the Presbyterians—Character of the Parliament of 1661—Election scene in the Guildhall—The Fifth Monarchy Insurrection—A pretence for more oppression—The Act of Uniformity, 1662—No honest attempt to unite parties—The Revised Prayer Book more or less Protestant than the older?—History of the Bill in Lords and Commons—The Conventicle and Five Mile Acts—Special object of the Test Act—Not repealed till 1828—The King as the friend of religious liberty—Claims a dispensing power—His Declarations of Indulgence—Contest with Parliament—Dissenters perplexed—Shaftesbury as Lord Chancellor—His character—Charles needs money and submits—Resumes his true character as persecutor—His bargain with France to betray his country and restore Popery in 1670—Guizot and Macaulay on his character—Contrasts suggested by his history—Between the Whitehall of Cromwell and the Whitehall of Charles—Between the England of Cromwell and the England of Charles—Between the beginning and the end of the reign of Charles—Consequences of the policy of the Restoration—Suffering in England and Scotland—Disastrous to the Church of England—Dean Stanley's theory of the Church—Nonconformity not crushed but confirmed by the policy of the Restoration—Overruled for the establishment of religious liberty.

V.

THE POLICY OF THE RESTORATION, AND OF THE REIGN OF CHARLES THE SECOND.

CROMWELL, not yet sixty years old, died on the third of September, 1658. It was the anniversary of two of his most famous battles, Dunbar and Worcester. Four days before there raged a great storm, to which friends and foes have sometimes attached a mysterious significance,—some regarding it as a symbol of the life that was about to end; while it might be more fitly regarded as prophetic of the life which England was destined to live for thirty years to come, now that the strong hand of the Protector was conquered by the stronger hand of death. The father was succeeded by the son as quietly as if the succession had been hereditary and unchallengeable. But the quiet was of brief duration. Richard was not born to rule. He had lived the life of a country gentleman, and was more at home in the sports of the field than in the cares of statesmanship. Moreover, his sympathies were with the exiled Stuarts rather than with his father and his father's friends. Without any deep religious convictions, he was equally without the genius and the resolute will which his high office required. He was not the man to do what his father had failed to do—to conduct England onward to a Constitutionalism which should embody all the best fruits of the struggle which had ended in the defeat of Charles I. He was more fit to be a stepping-

stone for the return of Royalty, or at least to give time for the preparing of a highway for its return. Of his brief Protectorate of eight months it is enough to say that the land was seething with the ambitions and schemes and passions of parties the most diverse, from the old Royalists whose motto might be, "We have no king but Cæsar;" to the Fifth Monarchy men, whose motto was, "We have no King but Jesus." The nation seemed as if it would end in chaos. And, in the words of Guizot, "the country changed masters in a paroxysm of anarchy."

The principal parties which divided the land were the old Royalist Episcopalians, the almost equally Royalist Presbyterians, and the Independents. That it fared hard with the adherents of the old Episcopacy at the hands of the Long Parliament, and during what may be called the reign of Cromwell, cannot be denied. But Hallam, a competent and impartial witness, says, "I do not know that any member of the Church of England was imprisoned under the Commonwealth, except for some political reason." He says at the same time, "It is somewhat bold in Anglican writers to complain, as they now and then do, of the persecution they suffered at this period, when we consider what had been the conduct of the bishops before, and what it was afterwards." This is a line of defence, however, which I would not take. If the bishops did wrong, that is no reason why wrong should be done to them. The bishops were consistent in suppressing by force the men of the Commonwealth. Whether religiously or only politically, Independents were inconsistent if they followed their example. I do not now pronounce judgment on the facts of their government, I only assert a principle. The Royalist Episcopalians, whether treated rightfully or wrongfully during the interregnum between the first and the second Charles, could not but

desire the restoration of the monarchy, and with it their ancient ascendancy. And this they did with great caution at the first, but with growing boldness, and with most fatal success.

The Presbyterians desired the return of Charles as fervently as did the Episcopalians. Had not Charles in the days of adversity sworn fidelity to the solemn League and Covenant? Had not the Presbyterian Establishment, which the Long Parliament had endeavoured to substitute for the Episcopalian, been sorely discouraged by Oliver Cromwell? Certain Presbyterian ministers who "seemed to be pillars," visited Charles, and assured him that in obedience to the covenant, they had urged upon the people the duty of restoring him; and, after thanking God for his Majesty's constancy to the Protestant religion, they declared themselves by no means inimical to moderate Episcopacy; they only desired that in religion things held indifferent by those who used them, should not be imposed upon the consciences of others to whom they appeared unlawful. By which however they did not mean to ask for a general toleration. That was an idea most abhorrent to them. At a second interview they betrayed their unwillingness to concede perfect liberty even to Charles himself. They told him that the people were unaccustomed to the Common Prayer, and it would be much wondered at if, as soon as he landed, he should introduce it in his own chapel. They begged, at all events, that he would not use it entirely, but only some parts of it, and permit extempore prayers by his chaplains. The king replied with some warmth, that whilst *they* sought liberty, *he* wished to enjoy the same himself. He was right; and so was the Princess Mary, the daughter of Henry VIII., when, urged and enjoined by her brother Edward and his Council to desist from what they regarded as the idolatry of the mass, she answered that *her soul was*

God's, and she would not change nor dissemble her opinion. The pity is that she, and the Stuarts after her, did not remember that the souls of their subjects were God's likewise.

There was a third great party in the State¹ at this time. The Independents had shared irregularly, and I may say sporadically, in the benefits of Cromwell's State Establishment, but they had never sought to impose their opinions and practices on others. Their advocacy of freedom was an offence both to Episcopalians and to Presbyterians. It was deemed an insult to truth and a dishonour to the God of truth. But nothing moved them from a position which they regarded as sanctioned both by reason and religion. They bemoaned the prospect of the Restoration, but were powerless to thwart the intrigues, not to say the treason,* of General Monk, or to suppress the rising tide of Royalism. And when the event was consummated, they sought nothing but what they would concede to others.

I do not plead for the Independents of 1660 that they were prepared to carry out the principles of religious liberty to their most absolute limits. Even Milton, whose gorgeous eloquence in praise of liberty is a joy to us to read even now, halted in his exposition of its practical

* "Of Monk himself it may, I think, be said that, if his conduct in this revolution was not that of a high-minded patriot, it did not deserve all the reproach that has been so frequently thrown upon it. No one can, without forfeiting all pretensions to have his own word believed, excuse his incomparable deceit and perjury; a masterpiece, no doubt, as it ought to be reckoned by those who set at nought the obligations of veracity in public transactions, of that wisdom which is not from above. But, in seconding the public wish for the king's restoration, a step which few, perhaps, can be so much in love with fanatical and tyrannous usurpation [!] as to condemn, he seems to have used what influence he possessed—an influence by no means commanding—to render the new settlement as little injurious as possible to public and private interests."—*Hallam's Constitutional History*, vol. ii. 301.

issues. But no one will venture to doubt the sincerity of the declarations which are found in the Savoy Confession—the Confession of a synod of Independents which Cromwell allowed to meet in the last year of his life. In the preface to this Confession its authors assert “that all professing Christians with their errors that are purely spiritual, and intrench and overthrow not civil society, are to be borne with, and permitted to enjoy all ordinances and privileges according to their light, as fully as any of their brethren who pretend to the greatest orthodoxy.” And they solemnly declare “that if they had all the power, which any of their brethren of different opinions had desired to have over them or others, they would freely grant this liberty to them all.”

Of minor parties which may be numbered with Protestants, I need say nothing. And of the Roman Catholics only this—that it was their policy to bide their time. Charles might avow his attachment to Protestantism, and allow himself to be thanked for his loyal devotion to it. But from the beginning of his reign there were whisperings which encouraged the hopes of Roman Catholics. And they knew that secret favour would further their designs more than open patronage.

The difficulty of government, with the nation not only thus divided but perplexed with a thousand cross currents of bitter memories and irreconcilable jealousies, we can but imperfectly appreciate. To us, with our modern ideas, it may appear that there was an easy solution of it. Let religious parties fight their battles with tongue and pen, and let civil rulers confine their jurisdiction to civil affairs. But this would be to adopt the principle of the Independents, and to any such adoption both Episcopalians and Presbyterians would render most resolute opposition. Let us see who and what manner of men they were on

whom devolved the task of governing in these circumstances, and how they governed.

Foremost of the men of the Restoration was Edward Hyde, Lord Clarendon. A modern writer has not inaptly described him as "the founder of the old High Church Tory party, repelling politely but inexorably the Papist on the one hand, and inexorably, but with no politeness, all Non-Anglican Protestants on the other hand." In the short Parliament which sat in the spring of 1640, Edward Hyde occupied an intermediate position between the king and the patriots who were contesting the king's high-handed proceedings. In the early days of the Long Parliament, which assembled in the same year, he fought side by side with Falkland, Pym, and Hampden, against the unconstitutional action of the Crown. How he gradually withdrew from this noble companionship, fearing what he regarded as extreme measures and influenced by his devotion to Episcopacy, I have no time to relate. When Charles II. was in exile, Sir Edward Hyde was his chief adviser. And such was his zeal for Episcopacy that when the worship of the Church of England was suspended at Paris, and the exiled king proposed to attend Divine service in a Huguenot chapel, Hyde insisted that he should rather abstain from public worship altogether. The future of the man might be anticipated from his past. He would support the king with a most religious zeal, but with certain limitations. On the one hand he would not sanction a personal government, such as had ruined Charles I. On the other he would keep steadily before him the repression of all Nonconformity, whether Papist or Protestant. He could see in Protestant Nonconformist sects of all sorts nothing but a compound (to use his own words), "of will, and humour [temper], and folly, and knavery, and ambition, and malice, which (he said) make men inseparably cling together till they have satisfaction

in all their pretences, or till they are absolutely broken and subdued." Now, to see them absolutely broken and subdued was the end which he set before himself, and of which he never lost sight. And if he must practise hypocrisy and traverse tortuous and underground paths to attain it, he would.

Next to Lord Clarendon, or rather side by side with him, stands Dr. Gilbert Sheldon, who became Bishop of London at the Restoration, and Archbishop of Canterbury three years later. Bishop Burnet, who was a keen observer of men and things, says of him :

"He was a very dexterous man in business, had a great quickness of apprehension, and a very true judgment. He was a generous and charitable man. He had a great pleasantness of conversation, perhaps too great. He had an art that was peculiar to him of treating all that came to him in a most obliging manner, but few depended much on his professions of friendship. He seemed not to have a deep sense of religion, if any at all ; and spoke of it, most commonly, as an engine of government and a matter of policy. *By this means the king came to look on him as a wise and honest clergyman.*"

It was Sheldon more than any other that moulded the ecclesiastical policy of the Restoration.

"He hated Nonconformists mainly on three grounds," says Dr. Stoughton. "As a man of the world, he was averse to their profession of spiritual religion, being totally unable to understand it, looking at it, as he did, through the medium of prejudices which caricatured its noblest qualities ; and he was also exasperated at what he deemed a pharisaical assumption on the part of Christians who advocate what are called 'evangelical' views, and who insist on what they style purity of communion. As a Royalist, Sheldon identified his opponents with the cause of Republicanism, and believed, or professed to believe, that they were all bent upon doing to Charles II. what some of them, or their predecessors, had done to Charles I. And lastly as an Episcopalian, who had himself suffered from Presbyterians and Independents, he determined to pay back in full what he owed, both capital and interest." *

* *History of Religion in England*, vol. iii. 460.

But what of the king himself? Were we to judge by the immediate antecedents of his return, we should anticipate a reign of equity and freedom. On May-day, 1660, a royal messenger was admitted into the presence of the House of Commons, to present a letter from Charles. Inclosed in this letter was a Declaration given under the king's sign manual and privy signet, at his court at Breda. And in this Declaration these words occur :

“And, because the passion and uncharitableness of the times have produced several opinions in religion, by which men are engaged in parties and animosities against each other, which, when they shall hereafter unite in a freedom of conversation, will be composed or better understood ; we do declare a liberty to tender consciences, and that no man shall be disquieted or called in question for differences of opinion in matters of religion which do not disturb the peace of the kingdom, and that we shall be ready to consent to such an act of Parliament, as, upon mature deliberation, shall be offered to us for the full granting of that indulgence.”

In the same letter Charles said that he had never given up the hope of recovering his rights, that he did not more desire to enjoy what was his own than that his subjects by law might enjoy what was theirs ; that he would grant a pardon under the Great Seal to all who should lay hold of his grace and favour within forty days, save those only who should be excepted by Act of Parliament ; and that he desired all notes of discord and separation should be utterly abolished.

Charles has learnt wisdom, any one might say, on hearing these words. The experiences of the past have not been in vain. He has understanding of the times ; he knows the England he has to govern, and knows how to govern it. No wonder that he should be received with an enthusiasm approaching to madness—“the bells ringing, the way strewed with flowers, the streets hung with tapestry, the fountains running with wine ; trumpets, music, and myriads of people shouting with irrepressible

joy." But Charles was a **Stuart**. Let **England** remember this, and it will rejoice with trembling. And yet we dismiss the matter too summarily, and do scant justice to the Stuarts when we find in their blood an explanation of all hypocrisy and falsehood. Queen Mary, the wife of William of Orange, was the daughter of Charles's brother James, and that true and truth-speaking man, John Howe, described her as "Incomparable," a "rare jewel, whose lustre was yet exceeded by its real virtues." His description of her character is elaborate and minute, and the terms in which he describes the mourning over her death may have inspired the somewhat similar terms in which Robert Hall painted the grief of England over the Princess Charlotte :

"Death marched in state and triumph that day; the king of terrors took the throne, and filled the part which it had made vacant; having plucked away from thence not only so bright an ornament, but so glorious an instrument, in our government; and all the orders of the realm, as captives, attended the chariot of the conqueror. England had lost its 'delight,' its 'pleasant comeliness,' and even 'half its soul.' Nothing could correspond to such a case but a national groan, as of a half-expiring kingdom, ready almost to breathe its last and give up the ghost."

But Charles was not as his niece Mary. England, as he found it, required for its government capacity almost more than human. Above all it required sincerity, moderation, fairness, and the fear of God. And none of these can be ascribed to the restored king. To him, as Dr. Stoughton has well said, the crown was a toy and the throne a chair of pleasure. We were told three weeks ago in this hall that his grandfather was a great liar, if not the greatest of liars. If we add lying looks and lying actions to lying lips, the grandson well earned a similar designation. Lord Halifax apologized for him by saying that if he dissembled, it is to be remembered that "disimulation is a jewel of the crown."

Speaking of Charles I., Macaulay says, "Churchmen,

Catholics, Presbyterians, Independents, his enemies, his friends, his tools, English, Scotch, Irish, all divisions and subdivisions of his people had been deceived by him. His most attached councillors turned away with shame and anguish from his false and hollow policy; plot intertwined with plot, mine sprung beneath mine, agents disowned, promises evaded, one pledge given in private, another in public.”* In this respect the second was not one whit better than the first. The word of a king, such as he, might be translated, “the word of a dissembler.”

Such was the man who, twelve months after Richard Cromwell had retired into private life, was proclaimed king (May 3, 1660) by what is known as the Convention Parliament.

Of the causes which produced or contributed to this result, time would fail me to say anything that would be worth saying. Suffice it that the immediate cause was the absence or want of a man strong enough to seize the hour and the occasion, and having any plausible right to do so. With this connect the state of the army and its leaders—apart altogether from the schemings of General Monk. But back of these immediate causes, and far more important, lies the fact that England was altogether unprepared for either a Republic or a Protectorate. Nations are not often born in a day, either politically or religiously. To overthrow, and that utterly, the government of a king who paid no respect to the ancient and constitutional liberties of his subjects, was one thing; to root out of the hearts of these subjects their inherited love of royalty, was another. The very tragedy in which the overthrow of Charles I. was consummated, instead of quenching this love, only made it more tender and sacred; and to this

* Review of Hallam's History in *The Edinburgh Review*.

must be added the mistaken legislation of the Puritans in the day of their power. A theocracy was a possible thing in Judea, instituted by God Himself and exercised by Him for special ends, but never elsewhere; and in no other circumstances has it been possible. It failed in Geneva, even under the mighty hand of John Calvin. It failed in Scotland, even with all the enthusiasm of the solemn League and Covenant. And it failed in England. The legislation of the Puritans was inspired by the theocratic principle, and it laid on the people burdens which they were not able to bear. The social habits of a people cannot be changed by the violence of an Act of Parliament; nor can their social instincts, pure or impure, be thus repressed. And this is what the Puritan legislation attempted to do. Sooner or later England would be itself again. But I must not enlarge on this subject.

The Parliament which restored Charles, untaught by the experiences of the past, exacted of the king no guarantees for either the civil or religious liberties of the nation. Sir Matthew Hale, deeply concerned to know the true character of the man who was about to ascend the throne, inquired of Bishop Morley, among other things, whether it was true, as had been asserted, that he intended to marry a Catholic princess. On being told that he did not, he said, "I am heartily glad of it, for it is impossible anything should more firmly and immovably fasten the king in the hearts of the people than seeing he would be pleased to marry a Protestant." Still, not perfectly satisfied, Sir Matthew endeavoured to secure the adoption of some precautions; and, before the Commissioners of the Parliament set out for Breda, he moved that a committee should be appointed to examine the propositions which had been presented in 1647 to the king in the Isle of Wight, with a view to ascertain which of them it would be expedient now to submit to the king his son.

The motion was supported, among others, by Prynne, who, with Henry Burton and Dr. Bastwick, had stood in the pillory, and had his ears cut off in the days of Laud. General Monk opposed the motion. He professed to know that incendiaries were on the watch for an opportunity to raise a flame, and argued that delay was dangerous. Besides, he said—

“What need is there of sending propositions to the king? Might we not as well prepare them, and offer them to him, when he shall come over? He will bring neither army nor treasure with him to fright or to corrupt us. So I move that we immediately send Commissioners to bring over the king; and I must lay the blame of all the blood and mischief that may follow on the heads of those who shall still insist on any motion that may delay the present settlement of the nation.”

This speech was received with such acclamations by the House that Hale had no alternative but to withdraw his motion.

We do not know that the decision of the Convention Parliament in this matter was of any practical consequence. An old cavalier, who was impatient of all delay and hesitation, said to one of the advisers of the king's mother, Henrietta Maria, “I take every hand to be proper which will do the work; and without examining what sect or profession they are, I am of opinion that, without a more sure way being visibly shown, the king should not stick to take his crown at their hands that will give it him, *upon such conditions as the givers should think fit.*” * And what then? Once in the saddle the rider could ride as he pleased. “No engagements,” said one who had been allied in turn with the most conspicuous leaders, and the most conspicuous opponents, of the Revolution, “will tie the king; he will break all he enters into.”

In the absence of parliamentary guarantees, the Decla-

* Guizot's *History of the Restoration*, ii. 180.

ration from Breda must be regarded as the moral basis of the right of Charles to sit on the English throne. It was on the faith of it that he was invited to return. If the reference to the authority of Parliament in that Declaration was meant to cover a possible retreat from the personal obligation to grant liberty to tender consciences, it was grossly dishonest. "Where the word of a king is," said Lord Manchester, as Speaker of the House of Lords, when the Declaration was received, "there is power; and where the word of our king is, there is truth; and power and truth are the best supports of Government."* An excellent aphorism, this. Only let it be carried into practice. Charles was pledged by his word, the word of a king, not to consent to any measures which Parliament in its omnipotence might pass in reference to matters in religion; but to consent to such an Act of Parliament as upon mature deliberation might be passed for the full granting of liberty to tender consciences. The Parliament which restored him accepted this obligation, and thus morally bound its successors to give it effect. With honest men it would have been held to be a Magna Charta for all after legislation.

It would be useless to attempt within the compass of a lecture to unravel the intricacies of the negotiations which followed the return of Charles. Suffice it that, after sundry deliberations and discussions between the city ministers who assembled in Sion College, and certain bishops, the king published a fresh Declaration, known as "the Worcester House Declaration," which bears date October 25, 1660, in which he said, "We do again renew our declaration from Breda, that no man shall be disquieted or called in question for differences of opinion in

* Guizot's *History of the Restoration*, ii. 214.

matters of religion which do not disturb the peace of the kingdom." This fresh declaration, however, assumed authority on the part of the king to determine not a few matters which were matters of eager debate. For the determining of these matters, the Declaration said—

"We intended to have called a synod of divines, but observing the over-passionate and turbulent way of proceeding of some persons, and the impatience of others for a speedy determination of these matters, we have been prevailed with to invert the method we proposed, and to give some determination ourself to the matters in difference, till such a synod may be called as may, without passion or prejudice, give us such further assistance towards a perfect union of affections, as well as submission to authority, as is necessary."

The king concluded with "conjuring all his loving subjects to acquiesce and submit to this declaration concerning the differences that have so much disquieted the nation at home, and given offence to the Protestant churches abroad."* The reference to "submission to authority" was ominous of evil to come. Neither the "liberty to tender consciences," to which the first declaration was pledged, nor "the perfect union of affections," at which the second aimed, could be secured on such a basis.

The evil genius of the Restoration was the principle which it had inherited, not alone from Popish times, but from Protestant as well—the right, and even duty, of the State to control the religion of the subject. The Act of Uniformity in 1662 was no novelty. It stood last in a long line of succession. In 1539 the six articles of Henry VIII., into which was distilled the essence of Popery, obtained the sanction of Parliament in "an Act for abolishing Diversity of Opinions in certain Articles of Religion." Mark the words: "abolishing diversity of opinions." As well attempt to abolish diversity of faces, or diversity of

* Neal's *History*, iii. 57-60.

flowers and fruits. There are some things which, to use Milton's phrase, are unforcible. And men know that they are unforcible. And yet they attempt to force them. This attempt was made through the reigns of Henry, Edward, Mary, Elizabeth, James, and Charles I., with relentless but ineffectual zeal. Uniformity was not attained. The Puritanism, which even the power of Elizabeth could not stamp out, finally rose to ascendancy, and with it sectaries and separatists, which the mass of the Puritans hated almost as bitterly as they hated Popery itself.

It might have been supposed that the experience of more than a century of Acts of Uniformity (1539-1646), with all the imprisonments and confiscations and exiles and martyrdoms which it caused and witnessed, and with less uniformity in the end than in the beginning, would have taught rulers the impolicy and fruitlessness, if not the wickedness, of attempting to force "unforcible things." But it was not so. The cup of Stuart folly and of English folly was not yet full. Through another generation the experiment must be continued. The nation must taste more of the gall and wormwood of enforced uniformity, before it will shake off the nightmare of spiritual domination.

The Corporation Act of Charles's first Parliament put an end to all doubt, if doubt there was, as to the policy of the Restoration. There was hypocrisy on the very face of it. With cruel irony it was entitled "An Act for the well governing and regulating Corporations," while it enacted that no one should be eligible for any office in any corporation who should not have, within one year next before his election, taken the sacrament of the Lord's Supper according to the rites of the Church of England. It required at the same time that all holders of office should swear that it was not lawful, upon any pretence whatsoever, to take up arms against the king, and that

the solemn League and Covenant was an unlawful oath imposed on the subject against the laws and liberties of the realm. And thus there was made at once a clean sweep of all Nonconformists from all the corporations of the kingdom. Commissioners were appointed to see to the execution of the Act, and their work was done with so much vigour that it is said that there was not one man left in the humblest capacity, in any English corporation, who dissented from the Church of England.

The Corporation Act was directed especially against the Presbyterians. They had been eager for the king's return, and were really the chief instruments in effecting it. And this was their reward. The Parliament which enacted it was not the Parliament which brought back Charles. The latter, the Convention Parliament, was in the main Presbyterian, and, after rendering to the king all the service he could get out of it, it was dissolved in the end of 1660. The Parliament of 1661 was made up for the most part of young men: of men, to use the words of Mr. Green, "who had but a faint memory of the Stuart tyranny under which their childhood had been spent, but who had a keen memory of living from manhood beneath [what they regarded as] the tyranny of the Commonwealth."

"The young squires felt that their time had come. The Puritan, the Presbyterian, the Commonwealth's man, were all at their feet. Their very bearing was that of wild revolt against the Puritan past. To a staid observer, Roger Pepys, they seemed a following of 'the most profane swearing fellows that ever I heard in my life.' Their whole policy appeared to be dictated by a passionate spirit of reaction. They would drive the Presbyterians from the bench and the polling-booth, as the Presbyterians had driven them. . . . For the first time from the Reformation the English gentry were ardent, not for king only, but for Church and king." *

It is in the Corporation Act of 1661, not in the Breda

* Green's *History of the English People*, iii. 356.

Declaration, that we see the policy of the Restoration, except indeed so far as hypocrisy was a part of that policy. "No man shall be disquieted or called in question for differences of opinion in matters of religion," the Declaration said. "Every man, holding any office in any Corporation, shall be disquieted and cast out who has not within the last twelve months partaken of the Lord's Supper according to the rites of the Episcopal Church," said the Corporation Act. And in so saying it spoke the mind and revealed the purpose of Charles and Clarendon and Sheldon and the English Court. The Breda Declaration promised that the King would assent to any Act of Parliament which should be presented to him for securing liberty of conscience. And now, twelve months later, the king assents to an Act which takes away at one fell swoop the liberties and immunities of citizenship, not only from all who will not conform in the future to the episcopal worship, but likewise from all who cannot prove that they have conformed within the twelve months preceding.

Let it not be supposed that Charles was bound as a constitutional monarch to accept the decision of the Lords and Commons of England in this matter. The Constitution was nothing to him but as it served his purposes. But even if it had been as sacred to him as it is to Queen Victoria, and if the prerogatives of the sovereign had been as restricted as they are now, let him only be a man of conscience and of courage, and he would say—"No; my word is pledged, and my throne is based on my pledged word; I wrote that no man should be disquieted under my reign for his religion; what I have written I have written." There have been men who would have spoken and acted thus at the risk of their crowns. But the second Charles was not such a man. The idea of expecting him to risk or sacrifice anything for truth or honour or rightness, only provokes a laugh of scorn. But not only so.

He and his ministers were foremost in their zeal to crush the Presbyterians. The Parliament which passed the Corporation Act was crammed with men who were their tools in all their arbitrary and violent measures—a hundred of them being in the pay of the court and receiving large sums of money from the exchequer. It was well designated the Pensionary Parliament. The court, moreover, had used all manner of means, fair and foul—foul at least—to get excluded from the new Parliament the Presbyterians who had been predominant in its predecessor, and to whom, we must repeat, Charles owed his throne. The city of London, to its honour, resisted these means successfully. “But rarely, if ever,” says Dr. Stoughton, “did the Guildhall contain a throng so densely packed, and echo with shouts and screams so loud and dissonant, and witness a contest for the choice of representatives in Parliament, so triumphant on one side, so humiliating on the other, so earnest on both, as on this occasion.”

“Episcopacy was at a discount, and the old hall was rent with cries of ‘No bishops! no bishops!’ Ten thousand citizens in livery—no doubt an exaggeration—were computed to be present; but the multitude, whatever the exact number, seemed so much of one mind, that a sympathising friend declared ‘there was a general acclamation for love and unity;’ adding that ‘he never saw so general a union of Presbyterians, Independents, and Anabaptists, crying down the Episcopalians, who went away cursing and swearing, and wishing they had never come.’ The election was all but unanimous, and no poll was demanded by the party thus signally defeated.”*

The news of the defeat of the court in London did not reach the country, as it would now, in less than an hour’s time. Many letters were written to distant friends in the hope that the example of London would influence other parts. But they never reached their destination. They were intercepted and seized by the Government, and are now to be found in the State Paper Office.

* *Church and State Two Hundred Years Ago*, p. 167.

Besides, the king and his advisers had not waited for a parliamentary enactment to justify them in restoring the old order of things. Throughout the country, Commonwealth incumbents of parishes were displaced, and king's-men, with the old liturgy, installed in their place. With the restoration of Christmas festivities, even a Puritan in these days would scarcely find fault, provided it had not been compulsory. On the sixth of January (1661) an outbreak took place of which the Government availed themselves as an excuse for measures which had been already determined upon. This was the insurrection of the Fifth Monarchy men. Four years before, they had assembled, under their leader Venner, on Mile End Green, better known to us as Stepney Green, hoping to begin the reign of the saints. But Cromwell sent a troop of horse and seized Venner and twenty ringleaders, with chests of arms, and a standard exhibiting the lion of the tribe of Judah couchant, with the motto, "Who shall lift him up?" The fray ended in the imprisonment of Venner and his fellows. The outbreak in 1661 was not so easily quelled. For a time the city seemed in the hands and at the mercy of Venner. The soldiers of King Jesus, as they reckoned themselves, did not hesitate to shed the blood of the soldiers of King Charles. And some thirty of themselves lost their lives before the city was rescued from their power.

On the tenth of January a royal proclamation was issued which, while it named only Anabaptists, Quakers, and Fifth Monarchy men, put an end to all liberty of public worship throughout the country, and confined it within the walls of the parish churches. It did not touch any who might still be found within the Established Church, even if they did not yet practise strict episcopal forms. But there could be no public worship outside the parish

church. Even Presbyterians must be silent, and no more preach and pray according to their conscience. It was in vain that Independents and Baptists declared their loyalty to the king and protested against the Fifth Monarchy insurrection as a "horrid rebellion;" in vain that the Quakers addressed the king, desiring that he and his Council might "live for ever in the fear of God," and praying that Friends' meetings might not be broken up, and that four hundred of their number imprisoned in London might be released. Even Presbyterians, who were far enough removed from all sympathy with Venner, shared in the common suffering. Cavalier mobs abused Puritans of all classes — the rabble drowning the psalm and prayer in private houses by blowing horns, or putting an end to the service by throwing stones. All this three months after the Worcester House Declaration had renewed the Breda Declaration, and assured the nation that no one should be disquieted because of differences of opinion in matters of religion, and long before Parliament passed the Corporation Act. There is conclusive evidence that the proclamation against the meetings of Anabaptists, Quakers, and other sectaries, was resolved on four days before the Fifth Monarchy insurrection. Before one shot was fired by the fanatics who followed Venner, the decision of the king and court was taken to withdraw the liberty which had been assured from Breda and from Worcester House. Venner's outbreak was only a pretext for the proclamation of the tenth of January; it was not the cause of it.

The following year, 1662, witnessed the passing of an Act which, so far as the Church of England is concerned, is still in force, and which has had consequences the most profound and permanent—the Act of Uniformity. In the Worcester House Declaration of Oct. 23, 1660, already referred to, the King said :

"We will appoint an equal number of divines of both persuasions [Episcopalian and Presbyterian] to review the liturgy of the Church of England, and to make such alterations as shall be thought necessary; and some additional forms in the Scripture phrase, as near as may be, suited to the nature of the several parts of worship, and that it be left to the minister's choice to use one or other at his discretion."

Had this promise been honestly fulfilled the secession of the two thousand had never taken place. For even if on a "review of the liturgy" no common agreement was arrived at, there would be alternative services which might be used at the minister's discretion. But not only in the end was there no common agreement, nor indeed any *bona fide* endeavour towards it, but there was no provision made of alternative services nor any discretion left to the minister. The history of this Act, to be told fully, would require a separate lecture. But it is well known, and a brief reference will suffice. Notwithstanding the "infallible proofs" which the court had given of its resolute purpose to restore the ancient ecclesiastical *régime* in its entirety, and to the exclusion of every other form of worship, the Presbyterians still hoped against hope. It pleased the king and his advisers to deal with them as the angler deals with the fish which has got the hook in its mouth, but which, without care and caution on the part of the fisher, might, by a violent and sudden jerk, disappoint the fisher's hopes. They were too wily to declare offhand what their hearts had purposed. Hence the Savoy Conference. In ostensible fulfilment of the promise made in October, 1660, twenty-one clergymen of the Church of England, including twelve bishops, and an equal number of Presbyterian divines—no Independents, let it be observed—received a commission to meet at Bishop Sheldon's residence at the Savoy,

"To review the Book of Common Prayer, comparing it with the most ancient and purest liturgies; and to take into their serious and grave

considerations the several directions and rules, forms of prayer, and things in the said Book of Common Prayer contained, and to advise and consult upon the same; and if occasion be, to make such reasonable and necessary alterations, corrections and amendments, as shall be agreed upon to be needful and expedient for giving satisfaction to tender consciences, and the restoring and continuance of peace and unity in the churches under his Majesty's government and direction."

These were the terms of the commission. But the bishops and their clergy, led by Sheldon, would not "advise and consult." They knew their own mind, and had the worldly wisdom to throw on the Presbyterians the onus of declaring in full all the "alterations, corrections, and amendments" they had to propose. How that most unworldly-wise man, Richard Baxter, fell into the snare which was thus laid for him and his brethren, has often been told; and how the bishops on their part took advantage of excessive demands to concede nothing — nothing at least that was in the slightest degree material. Throughout there were two principles by which Sheldon and his followers were guided, which were as fixed stars by which they steered their course. First, there must be uniformity; and secondly, it must be a uniformity to which the Puritans could not honestly consent. And this was the conclusion of the whole matter.

The question has been eagerly discussed among Evangelical Churchmen whether the revised Prayer-book was less, or whether it was more, Protestant, than the Prayer-book which the Church had inherited from Edward VI. and Elizabeth. There are who maintain that the alterations which were made in 1662, *taken as a whole*, went not in the direction of sacerdotalism and High Churchism, but in the opposite direction, and were in perfect harmony with the Prayer-book of the great reformers. There are who maintain the opposite of these positions. And it requires a minute acquaintance with the earlier editions of the Prayer book, and the latest, to be able to form a correct

judgment on the matter. But in discussing this question men are apt to forget what the real task of Sheldon and his brethren was in 1662. It was not to ascertain what the Reformers had done and sanctioned a century, or even half a century before, but to determine what it was right to do in circumstances which were altogether new. They were instructed to examine the old liturgies, and "if occasion be to make such reasonable and necessary alterations, corrections, and amendments, as shall be agreed upon to be needful and expedient for giving satisfaction to tender consciences, and the restoring and continuance of peace and unity." And the charge against them is that they did nothing of this sort. No one pretends that they did. The Puritan Presbyterians were as zealous for uniformity as the favourers of Episcopacy themselves. And they would have accepted a moderate Episcopacy as the basis of uniformity. It is true that good Richard Baxter fell, as I have said, into the snare which was laid for him, and when asked what changes he and his friends desired, prepared what was substantially a new liturgy. He and his friends, however, would have accepted the old liturgy with certain changes in the direction of a purer Protestantism. But the opportunity was denied them. The authors of the Act of Uniformity, "it is plain," to use the words of Archdeacon Hare, "were not seeking unity but division." And when the division was consummated on St. Bartholomew's Day, Bishop Sheldon only regretted that more men had not been driven out. The terms applied to the Act by Archdeacon Hare are strikingly just: it was not only "tyrannical" but "schismatical," and it was schismatical not in effect merely, but in intention as well.

On the 29th of June, 1661, the "Bill for the Uniformity of Public Prayers and administration of Sacraments" was read for the first time in the House of Commons. It reached the House of Lords on the 10th of July. But the

House was occupied with other questions and soon after adjourned. And it was not till the 14th of January, 1662, that the Bill was read the first time. On the 17th it was read a second time. But questions arose as to the book which was attached the Bill, and whether it would not be better simply to confirm the old book without any alterations, and to revive Queen Elizabeth's Act of Uniformity. On the 9th of April the Bill was read a third time. As passed by the Lords it was more severe in some respects, and less in others, than as it came from the Commons. Instead of a general assent and consent to the *use* of the book, the Bill now required assent and consent to *all that the book contained*. It required at the same time a declaration of non-resistance and of the unlawfulness of the solemn League and Covenant, like that prescribed in the Corporation Act. It likewise changed the date at which the Act should come into operation from Michaelmas to an earlier day, St. Bartholomew's. On the other hand, it gave to the king a dispensing power as to the use of the surplice and the sign of the cross, and granted one-fifth out of the forfeited livings to ministers who might not conform to the new law. The Commons, however, while accepting the amendments which added to the severity of the Bill, rejected those which showed any consideration for Nonconformists. They further added to its severity by subjecting to its operation, not the clergy alone, but all who held offices in the universities, and every kind of teacher down to the village schoolmaster. In the conference with the Lords which followed, the spokesman for the House of Commons, in reply to a reference which had been made to the king's engagement at Breda to respect "tender consciences," only laughed at the idea of calling schismatical consciences tender consciences. And the Bill in its severest form finally received the royal assent on the 19th of May.

What followed on St. Bartholomew's day need not be told. But enough had not yet been done to stamp out both Puritanism and Nonconformity, or, in the words of Lord Clarendon, to absolutely break and subdue them, and nothing short of that was the policy of the Restoration. In 1664 the Conventicle Act was passed, which rendered it unlawful to be present at any meeting for religious worship, except according to the usage of the Church of England, where five besides the family should assemble. The penalty for the first offence was three months' imprisonment or a fine of five pounds; for the second, six months' or ten pounds; for the third, banishment for seven years, or £100; and in case of return or escape, death without benefit of clergy! In 1665 came the Five Mile Act, an "Act for restraining Nonconformists from inhabiting in Corporations," whereby all Dissenting ministers who should not take certain oaths were banished five miles from all corporation towns, and subject to a fine of forty pounds in case they should preach in any conventicle: and in 1670 came another Conventicle Act, whereby justices of the peace were empowered to break open doors where they were informed that Nonconformist conventicles were held and take the offenders into custody.

The Test Act, which was passed thirteen years after the Corporation Act, was of an altogether different character and purposed a different end. The king was suspected of being a Papist, and the nation was in fear of an avowed Papist ascending the throne in the person of the king's brother, then Duke of York, afterwards James II. The Commons in alarm passed an Act to confine all places of trust and profit to those who were members of the Church of England. The Dissenters consented to be ostracised for the common good. The two Acts, known as the Corporation and Test Acts, the one passed by the court party to crush Dissenters, and the other, passed thirteen

years later, against the will of the court party, to save the nation from popish rule, had this in common, that they rendered the partaking of the Lord's Supper according to the rites of the Church of England, and from the hands of a clergyman of the Church of England, a *sine quâ non* for the holding of any office under the State. And looking at the matter from this point of view, the wonder is that religiously minded men in the Church of England, especially in recent times, did not revolt from having the most sacred ordinance of their faith turned into a State qualification for State office. But Churchmen, instead of resenting it as an indignity to have their altars made stepping-stones whereby the most worldly and wicked men in the realm might, if they chose, ascend to civil power, clung to the last to these Acts as an honoured prerogative and sure defence of the Church of England. It was only after a protracted conflict that they were at last repealed in 1828, after a long life of more than a century and a half.

At intervals and on certain occasions throughout his reign, Charles the Second figures as the friend of religious liberty; and his action and the counteraction with which it was met have an important place in the constitutional history of England. When the Bill for Uniformity was before the House of Lords, the king endeavoured to secure for himself a dispensing power. Three days after St. Bartholomew's, certain Presbyterian ministers, now silenced, presented a petition, in which "they humbly cast themselves at his Majesty's feet, and desired him of his princely wisdom to take some effectual course that they might be continued in their ministry to teach his people obedience to God and to his Majesty." When the matter was debated in council the king gave his opinion in favour of indulgence if it was feasible. The Earl of

Manchester and others were for conniving at the more eminent divines, and putting curates into their churches to read the service till they should die off. But Lord Clarendon argued for the strict execution of the law, and Bishop Sheldon supported his contention. If the Act was suspended, he said, he could not maintain his episcopal authority. "England is accustomed to obey laws," he said, "so that while we stand on that ground we are safe." In the end the Council resolved to let the law take its course.

But four months after, the King published a declaration to all his loving subjects, avowedly by the advice of his privy council, dated December 26th, 1662, in which he recited the Breda promises and his firm resolution to perform them "to the full." "It must not be wondered at," the king said, "since the Parliament to which those promises were made, never thought fit to offer us an act for that purpose, that we being so zealous as we are (and by the grace of God shall ever be). [oh! royal hypocrite!] for the maintenance of the true Protestant religion, should give its establishment the precedency before matters of indulgence to dissenters from it." But this being now accomplished, the king hastened to renew his assurance that so far as penalties for dissent were concerned, he would make it his special care to incline the wisdom of the ensuing Parliament to concur with him in passing an Act which should "enable him to exercise with a more universal satisfaction that power of dispensing which he conceived to be inherent in him." As to Papists he avowed the sense he had that they had deserved well of his royal father and himself, and he could not exclude them from the proposed indulgence, but "they were not to expect an open toleration."

To all which *we* might reply that if the penalties of the Act of Uniformity were inconsistent with his Breda

promises, he should not have consented to the Act. And even now he does not ask Parliament to repeal these penalties, but to acknowledge in him a dispensing power to deal with them as he pleases.

This declaration must have been framed without the knowledge of Lord Clarendon and Bishop Sheldon. According to Bishop Burnet, it was the result of a council of Papists, at the Earl of Bristol's, with the king himself. We do not wonder that the House of Commons should resent the king's desire to have a legal power of indulgence vested in him, which he might use or recall as he thought fit—a power, in fact, to enforce or not to enforce an Act of Parliament at his pleasure. Their reply to the king's appeal to his Breda promises was plausible but evasive. "His Majesty's declaration from Breda," they said, "was not a promise but a gracious declaration to comply with the advice of Parliament, whereas no such advice has been given." This was a most untruthful version of the king's words. The king promised to consent to such an Act of Parliament as should secure liberty of conscience. Parliament gave him an Act, or Acts rather, which destroyed liberty of conscience, and he consented to these. When the House of Commons pled that to hold them bound by the king's declaration was "to suppose a disability in the whole legislature to make a law contrary to his Majesty's declaration," it might be replied that in this instance they were morally "disabled" to make any such law, the king's declaration being virtually the charter of the new kingdom. The issue of the conflict, however, was that the Parliament conquered and even addressed the king to put the laws in execution against the Papists. The king's own chancellor, Lord Clarendon, opposed his wishes; and thus began, it is believed, the alienation which led to his fall. As to the king himself his conduct in the matter of the Corporation

Act, and in the proceedings of his government before that Act was passed, render it impossible that he should be credited with any concern for liberty of conscience. Bishop Kennet remarked naïvely that whether the king's desire for indulgence "was from his good nature or from a secret inclination to introduce Popery, it was not very decent to determine."

Five years later (February 10, 1667) the king recommended to his Parliament to "seriously think of some course to beget a better union and composure in the minds of his Protestant subjects in matters of religion," but with the same result. The Parliament petitioned him to issue his "proclamation for enforcing the laws against conventicles, and for preserving the peace of the kingdom against unlawful assemblies of Papists and Nonconformists." And this he did in terms of the utmost severity. Negotiations which were set on foot this same year (1667) between certain liberal men, laic and cleric, and some leading Nonconformists, with a view to the comprehension of such as might be brought into the Church, by some abatements, and a toleration for the rest, so alarmed the bishops that they procured a vote by Parliament that no such Act should be brought into the House. And Archbishop Sheldon bestirred himself, as usual, to get the laws put into execution against Nonconformists, and particularly against the preachers, according to the Five Mile Act, which forbade them, as the phrase was, "inhabiting corporations."

Five years later still the king issued a Declaration of Indulgence without caring to have the consent of Parliament (March 15, 1671-72). This declaration asserted truly enough that "the many and frequent ways of coercion that had been used for reducing all erring and dissenting persons" had produced "very little fruit." It was the king's "express resolution," he said, "to preserve

the Church of England entire as now established by law but it was his will and pleasure that the execution of all and all manner of penal laws in matters ecclesiastical, against whatsoever sort of Nonconformists or recusants, be immediately suspended." As to Roman Catholic recusants they were not to be allowed to have public places of worship, but they were to share in the common exemption from the penal laws, and to be allowed the exercise of their worship in their private houses.

This declaration involved the Dissenters in great difficulty. Ought they, or ought they not, to accept the Indulgence? The question was variously answered. The dispensing power claimed by the sovereign was unconstitutional. But, then, neither sovereign nor Parliament had any right to deprive the people of liberty to worship. And when that liberty was within their reach, why should they not use it? As to Sheldon and the bishops they were in no doubt as to how to act. They resisted the Indulgence vigorously, and alarmed the nation, and not without cause, as to the incoming of Popery. When the king met his Parliament in February, 1673, after a recess of one year and nine months, he told them that he had found the good effect of his indulgence to Dissenters, that it was a mistake to say that more liberty was given to Papists than to others, and, "to deal plainly with you," he said, "I am resolved to stick to my Declaration." Lord Clarendon was now in disgrace and exile, and had been for six years, that is, since 1667. The Lord Chancellor, Shaftesbury, was a man of strange history and strange character. Ashley Cooper had fought for Charles I., and then for Cromwell, and even found a place in Cromwell's council. His public life ended in a desperate attempt to put the Duke of Monmouth, the illegitimate son of Charles II., on the throne of James II. When he became the minister of Charles he threw himself into the

debauchery of the court with an ardour which surprised even his master. "You are the wickedest dog in England!" laughed the king, at some unscrupulous jest of Shaftesbury's. "Of a subject, sir, I believe I am," was the unabashed reply. Shaftesbury was never at a loss for a witty reply. "When will you have done preaching?" a bishop murmured as he was speaking in the house of Peers. "When I am a bishop, my lord," was the laughing reply.

This is the man who was now Lord Chancellor, and who vindicated the Indulgence and magnified the king's zeal for the Church of England and the Protestant religion. But Parliament would not yield. The House of Commons declared against the dispensing power, and argued unanswerably that though the king had a power to pardon offenders, he had not a power to authorize men to break the laws, for this would infer a power to alter the government; and if the king could secure offenders by indemnifying them beforehand, it was in vain to make any laws at all, because, according to this maxim, they had no force but at the king's discretion. The king answered, and Parliament rejoined not only by a strong resolution, but by "stopping the supplies." The king was sadly in want of money to prosecute a miserable war with the Dutch, and had no alternative but to submit. And this he did in the most humiliating manner (March 8, 1673).

"If there be any scruple yet remaining with you touching the suspension of the penal laws, I here faithfully promise you that what has been done in that particular shall not for the future be drawn into example and consequence; and as I daily expect from you a bill for my supply, so I assure you I shall as willingly receive and pass any other you shall offer me, that may tend to the giving you satisfaction in all your just grievances."

And so saying, he called for the declaration and broke the seal with his own hands. And thus were revoked all

the licenses which had been granted for dissenting meeting-houses.

The eyes of Dissenters were now turned to Parliament in hopes that the liberty which Charles had attempted to give them, but unconstitutionally, might be secured to them legally. And a Bill for that end was brought into the House of Commons, *nemine contradicente*. But the tactics of delay and obstruction are no modern invention. The Bill could not get beyond a second reading. The "dead weight," as a contemporary authority says, "of the bishops joined with the king and the caballing (then the ministerial) party" prevented progress till Parliament was prorogued.

And thus ended the king's endeavours in the direction of religious liberty, the secret aim of which, however, was suspected to be, and was afterwards proved to be, to pave the way for the return of Popery to power in England.

It was after the recall of the Indulgence, it will be remembered, that the Test Act, which was designed to strike at the Duke of York and at other Papists who held offices of trust and influence, was passed. And now, to use the words of Neal—

"The Papists being excluded from places of trust; the court had no tenderness for Protestant Nonconformists; the judges therefore had orders to quicken the execution of the laws against them. The estates of those of the best quality in each county were ordered to be seized. The mouths of the High Church pulpитеers were encouraged to open as loud as possible; one, in his sermon before the House of Commons, told them that the Nonconformists ought not to be tolerated, but to be cured by vengeance. He urged them to set fire to the fagot, and to teach them by scourges or scorpions, and open their eyes with gall. While the king himself issued out a proclamation for putting the penal laws in full execution, which (says the historian) had its effect."*

* *History*, iii. 193.

Good Richard Baxter was one of the first on whom the storm fell. The memory of the Restoration and its pledges was absolutely cancelled. Archbishop Sheldon issued circulars by which the zeal of informers and of persecuting magistrates was quickened. When the king wanted money, and thought it would gratify bitter spirits in the House of Commons, or stifle the clamours of the populace, he republished his proclamation for the suppressing of conventicles. Consistency had no place in his thoughts—to say and to unsay were equally easy for him. *Per fas aut nefas* was his principle of action.

While Charles was avowing, in the days of his attempted indulgences, his devotion to the Episcopal Church, his “firm resolve” to maintain it, and his concern to fulfil at the same time his Breda promises, he was already bound, by secret treaty, to restore England to the Papacy and to accept the aid of French soldiers to accomplish this end. It is now known that as early as 1670, fifteen years before he avowed himself a Roman Catholic—which he did only in his last mortal struggle—and three years before his conflict with Parliament on the question of indulging Dissenters, in which conflict no language was too strong for the assertion of his attachment to the Protestant religion—he had entered into a secret treaty with France, of which it is far too little to say that it was shameful and humiliating—it was treason against the State, more so than any of the acts of his unfortunate father. The king and his brother James had conferred confidentially with two of the king’s ministers, as to the ways and methods fit to be taken for the advancement of the Catholic religion in England. In pursuance of this object, Charles formed a league with Louis of France, by which the French king engaged to pay the English king £200,000 annually, and to send him 6,000 French troops to aid him in the perils which would follow his avowal of Popery. Plymouth, Hull, and

Portsmouth were to be fortified and placed in trusty hands, while the fleet was to be under the command of the Duke of York as Lord Admiral. In return for the aid of the king of France, Charles undertook to serve his ally's ambition and wounded pride against the United Provinces. "Each conspirator," says Hallam, "in his coalition against the Protestant faiths and liberties of Europe, had splendid objects in view; but those of Louis seemed the more probable of the two and less liable to be defeated. The full completion of their scheme would have united a great kingdom to the Catholic religion, and turned a powerful neighbour into a pensioner." How this daring and wicked scheme, of which there were suspicions at the time, or soon after, but the full knowledge of which was obtained only a century later, was frustrated, we do not know fully. But one thing is known, that a mutual distrust on the part of the royal conspirators prevented its immediate execution—Charles, unwilling to commit himself till he should receive money, Louis too cautious to run the risk of throwing his money away.

In the light of these facts it can scarcely be doubted that they were right who suspected Charles of being a Papist from the beginning, unless, indeed, he was, as Buckingham who knew him well said he was, a Deist.

Guizot calls him an "unbelieving libertine." Macaulay says that "his mind oscillated between Hobbism and Popery. When his health was good and his spirits high he was a scoffer. In his few serious moments he was a Roman Catholic." Between scepticism and superstition there is no gulf fixed. Instead of being, as they seem, wide asunder as the poles, the distance between them is travelled at a bound. And the man who hates religion, or uses it as a tool of worldliness and wickedness, is fain to die at last in the arms of the priest.

It can scarcely be necessary to say, even in the form of

a parenthesis, that the right of a man to be a Papist is as sacred as his right to be a Protestant. But the return of Popery to the throne of England in the days of Charles would have been death to English liberty if it had been effected. And in the days of his brother and successor England's liberties were saved only by driving a Papist from the throne.

On a review of the reign of Charles we are struck with a series of startling contrasts, which, however, we have only time to indicate.

There is first the contrast between the Whitehall of Cromwell and the Whitehall of Charles. Call Cromwell a usurper if you will. If he was a usurper it was because the ship was sinking, and some strong hand must seize the helm to save it. You dare not call him a hypocrite. No one worth listening to now does. His court was ordered as a godly and virtuous family might be expected to be. But what of the court of Charles? The Defender of the Faith! The Lord's anointed! Historians describe its infamies in terms which I will not quote. I never read them without recalling the description which Josephus gives us of the corruption of Jerusalem in the days of its fall. If the Roman army had not come to destroy it, Josephus says that fire from heaven must have descended to burn it up. Where, we ask, were those bishops whose zeal for the Church of England consumed them, while the head of the Church, and they knew it, was wallowing in bestial vice? Sheldon could give no slumber to his eyelids while Nonconformists had any respite from suffering. He could listen to the mock sermon of a cavalier who held up the Puritan phrase and the Puritan twang to ridicule, in his hall at Lambeth. Did he ever go to Whitehall and say plainly to Charles, Remember that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment?

If Lambeth ever whispered remonstrance in the ears of Whitehall, it was only in a whisper.

Some imagine that the corruption of the court of Charles II., loathsome as it was, may be accounted for as being only a reaction from the Puritan austerity of the days of Cromwell. Nothing could be more untrue in fact. It was only a return to the state of things which existed before the days of Puritan ascendancy, or a ripening of the seed which had been sown in the days of Charles I. The first Charles was, indeed, a better man morally than the second. But Mr. Charles Kingsley, in his *Plays and Puritans*, speaks of "the golden age of the English drama" as "one of private immorality," as well as of "public hypocrisy, ecclesiastical pedantry, and regal tyranny," and represents Charles I. as saying of *The Gamester* "that it was the best play he had seen for seven years." After giving an outline of the play, Mr. Kingsley adds: "If the cavaliers and damsels of Charles the First's day were in the habit of talking in that way to each other (and if they had not been, Shirley would not have dared to represent them as doing so), one cannot much wonder that the fire of God was needed to burn up (though, alas! only for a time) such a state of society, and that when needed the fire fell." But the fire which thus fell wrought no change in the moral state of the society of which the second Charles was the head and leader. The scenes which his father witnessed on the stage without a blush, he without a blush practised in his palace.

It is difficult to say how far the corruption of the court influenced other than court circles. But there is no reason to suppose that the Restoration wrought any material change in the character of that portion of the nation which had really come under the moral influence of Puritanism. Mr. Green refers to the popularity which the *Pilgrim's Progress* enjoyed from the first, as a proof

that the religious sympathies of the English people were still mainly Puritan, ten editions of it having been sold between its publication in 1678 and John Bunyan's death in 1681.* But one benefit at least accrued to the nation, according to Hallam, from the profligacy of the court. It helped to rid the nation of its besotted loyalty : it pressed forward the great ultimate security of English freedom, the expulsion of the House of Stuart.

There is another contrast which cannot be overlooked—the contrast between the England of Cromwell and the England of Charles, in relation to the nations of Europe. England never stood higher internationally than in the days of Cromwell ; it has never sunk lower than in the days of Charles.

“A fickle multitude,” wrote Macaulay, in a review of Hallam, “might crowd to shout and scoff around the gibbeted remains of the greatest prince and soldier of the age. But when the Dutch cannon startled an effeminate tyrant in his own palace, when the conquests which had been won by the armies of Cromwell were sold to pamper the harlots of Charles, when Englishmen were sent to fight under foreign banners against the independence of Europe and the Protestant religion, many hearts swelled in secret at the thought of one who had never suffered his country to be ill used by any but himself. It must indeed have been difficult for any Englishman to see the salaried viceroy of Francis [Charles] at the most important crisis of his fate, sauntering through his harem, yawning and talking nonsense over a dispatch, or beslobbering his brother and his courtiers in a fit of maudlin affection, without a respectful and tender remembrance of him before whose genius the young pride of Louis and the veteran craft of Mazarine had stood rebuked, who had humbled Spain on the land and Holland on the sea, and whose imperial voice had arrested the victorious arms of Sweden and the persecuting fires of Rome.”

Then we are struck with the contrast between the be-

* Only six months had passed after the king's return when John Bunyan was committed to Bedford gaol on a charge of preaching in unlicensed conventicles. And that gaol was the good man's home for nearly twelve years ! So much for the Breda Declaration !

ginning and the end of the reign of Charles. We have seen how he ascended his throne with profuse professions of zeal for the Protestant faith. And these professions were continued persistently to the last. It is now known that two years after his return he opened secret negotiations with the Pope of Rome. Seven years later he avowed himself in secret to be a Roman Catholic, and engaged, as we have seen, in a shameful bargain with the king of France to restore England to the popish faith. But for sixteen years more he wore the Protestant mask. When he landed on the English shore in 1660, the mayor of Dover presented him with a Bible, and in accepting it he said it was the book of all others that he loved best. When he found himself dying in 1685, after trampling underfoot with uttermost dishonour every precept of the holy book, he avowed himself a Roman Catholic, and received extreme unction from a Roman Catholic priest, who was smuggled into his chamber by a backstair. The open Bible at Dover and the covert mass at Whitehall form too great a contrast to have belonged to one man, if that man's heart had not been gangrened with hypocrisy. I cannot profess to solve the mystery of such a heart. "Human nature," one has well said, "is so capricious that there may be a sensitive point in a conscience which everywhere else is callous. A man without truth or humanity may have some strange scruples about a trifle." There was a gallant cavalier hanged, after the Restoration, for a flagitious burglary—a Colonel Turner. At the gallows he told the crowd that his mind received great consolation from one reflection—he had always taken off his hat when he went into a church.

When we turn to the *consequences* of the policy of the Restoration, we find the first and foremost in the sufferings to which Nonconformists were subjected. Nothing

but a recital of particulars could give us a just impression of their magnitude, intensity, and bitterness. The martyrdoms of the reign of Queen Mary become visible before our eyes in the lurid glare of the flames of Smithfield, but they represent far less of real suffering than do the protracted cruelties of the reign of Charles II. The names of sixty thousand Nonconformist sufferers have been collected, and of these six thousand died in prison. And the prisons of those days were more like to the Black Hole of Calcutta than to our modern prisons. No imagination can bring home to us the amount of wretchedness which was endured within English dungeons, for no other offence than the having a tender conscience which would obey God rather than man.

When we turn to Scotland we find suffering endured not so much in the dungeon as on the scaffold and on the battlefield. I will not sit in judgment on the Covenanters, or attempt an estimate of the right or wrong of the course they pursued. It may have been inspired by the *nemo impune lacessit* spirit of the nation, quite as much as by the spirit of the Christian faith. This is certain, that the Covenanters fought not only for their religion but for their national liberties. And the heroism with which they fought, thrills the hearts even of those who sympathize rather with the martyrs who repel oppression by the irresistible might of weakness, than with those who repel it by the sword. If the Covenanters were, or became, "wild and fanatical," it was, to use the words of the cool and philosophic Hallam, "through intolerable oppression." "Thirty years," says Hallam, "consummated the misfortunes and degradation of Scotland."

"No part, I believe, of modern history, for so long a period, can be compared for the wickedness of government, to the Scots' administration of this reign. In proportion as the laws grew more vigorous against the Presbyterian worship, its followers evinced more steadiness; driven from their conventicles, they resorted sometimes by

night to the fields, the woods, the mountains; and as the troops were continually employed to disperse them, they came with arms, which they were often obliged to use; and thus the hour, the place, the circumstance, deepened every impression, and bound up their faith with indissoluble associations. The same causes produced a dark fanaticism, which believed the revenge of its own wrongs to be the execution of divine justice; and as this acquired new strength by every successive aggravation of tyranny, it is literally possible that a continuance of the Stuart government might have led to something very like an extermination of the people in the western counties of Scotland.”*

And all this grew out of the policy of the Restoration of Charles, whose return the Scotch Presbyterians hailed with unbounded delight.

The reign of Charles II. holds no unimportant place in our constitutional history. The second was really not more willing than the first Charles, to be a constitutional monarch, but he lacked the strong will and the daring which were necessary for a fresh contest with Parliament. He had so far profited by his father’s experience that he feared a repetition of it, and acted the part of Pliable where his father would have acted the part of Obstinate. Hallam, after describing the wrongs of the reign of Charles, says :

“It may seem rather an extraordinary position, after the last chapters, yet it is strictly true, that the fundamental privileges of the subject were less invaded, the prerogative swerved into fewer excesses, during the reign of Charles II. than in any former period of equal length. Thanks to the patriotic energies of Selden and Eliot, of Pym and Hampden, the constitutional boundaries of royal power had been so well established that no minister was daring enough to attempt any flagrant and general violation of them.”†

The fact is, strange as the statement may seem, the wrongs which were inflicted on Nonconformists in this reign in England were inflicted constitutionally, that is, by acts of the Legislature. There was no Star Chamber

* *Constitutional History*, iii. 326.

† *Ibid.* iii. 1.

and no High Commission Court. The administration of justice, or, as the case often was, of injustice, was in the hands of the ordinary tribunals, and was exercised before the face of day. And all this was a clear gain : personal despotism or absolutism could be attempted in future only at the risk of losing the opportunity to exercise it.

But while there was thus a triumph of parliamentary authority over mere prerogative, we should note that the Parliament itself can scarcely be called constitutional according to our modern notions. It was summoned amid the first burst of royalist enthusiasm, and it continued in existence for eighteen years without giving the country any opportunity of a renewed expression of its judgment. The spirit of Clarendon survived his fall for twelve years ; and the parliaments which followed during the remaining six years of the reign of Charles were not in any real sense representative of the nation.

When we turn to the Church of England, the policy of the Restoration was most disastrous. Its aim, apart, that is, from the hidden aims of the sovereign—the aim of the legislature, of statesmen, and of bishops—was to restore the Episcopal Church to its ancient supremacy and to make it by force the Church of the nation. Its effect was, in the language of Mr. Green, to break England into two nations, and, I add, to make the Church of England the most sectarian church in England.

“The Church of England,” says Mr. Green (himself a clergyman), “stood from that moment (the passing of the Act of Uniformity) isolated and alone among all the Churches of the Christian world. The Reformation had severed it irretrievably from those which still clung to the obedience of the Papacy. By its rejection of all but episcopal orders, the Act of Uniformity severed it as irretrievably from the general body of the Protestant churches, whether Lutheran or Reformed. And while thus cut off from all healthy religious communion with the world without, it sank into immobility within. With the expulsion of the Puritan clergy, all change, all efforts after reform, all national

development, suddenly stopped. From that time to this the Episcopal Church has been unable to meet the varying spiritual needs of its adherents by any modification of its government or of its worship. It stands alone among all the religious bodies of Western Christendom in its failure through two hundred years to devise a single new service of prayer or of praise." *

There are not a few among the adherents of the Church of England who confess, to use the language of one of them, that "there is phraseology of a dubious and uncertain character now existing in the Prayer-book," which they wish with all their hearts had been expunged in 1662. But there are those who regard the passages which are thus described as "dubious and uncertain" as the very salt of the Prayer-book, without which it would lose its claim to the honour of being what they call Catholic. There are others who cherish an ideal which would include these opposites and many others besides. And if facts cannot be reconciled with their ideal, so much the worse for the facts. In one of the last pages written by Dean Stanley, I read :

"According to the original theory of the Church of England, as laid down by the Statutes of the Reformation, and as expounded in splendid language by its most majestic divine in his *Ecclesiastical Polity*, all Englishmen are supposed to belong to it, to have a claim on its ministrations, a share in its government, an interest in its welfare. In outward form the constitution thus laid down has, no doubt, been greatly modified ; but the works just enumerated are some amongst a thousand proofs that the substantial facts which that theory represented remain the same. It is impossible not to see that in their origin the different Nonconforming sects were but so many parties within the National Church. The idea of separation, of dissidence, of dissent for its own sake, was either altogether unknown in their first beginning, or else was secondary to more fundamental doctrines. It was an accident, so to speak—a series of accidents—often disastrous, untoward, deplorable—that in each case prevented the natural development of those sects or parties in the Church itself." †

* *History of the English People*, iii. 363.

† *Church and Chapel*. Edited by Rev. R. H. Haddon, p. xix.

One or two questions by way of cross-examination will show that this theory is only ideal, and a very hazy ideal. Can you name a single era in the history of the Church of England in which the Church has not been bound by a law of Uniformity? Can you name a single law of the Church or of the State which made any provision for, or contemplated the existence of, "a natural development" of differing sects within the Church? Has it not been express law, and not accidents of any kind, that has limited the Church to Conformists both in faith and order? You appeal to the Statutes of the Reformation; we admit that, in a sense, but not your sense, they did recognize all Englishmen as belonging to the Church, and therefore bound to believe what the Church taught; and if they did not so believe, they must cease to be Englishmen, to lose their English citizenship and their liberty, and must be thankful if they were allowed to live. This is the sense in which the Statutes of the Reformation, and the Statutes of Rome as well, recognized all Englishmen as belonging to the Church. And in this sense the recognition was no mere theory, but a bitter practice through many generations.

It is no reply to all this to say that in all periods of the Church's history, and notably since 1662, all parties have actually found a place within the pale of the Church. Even in 1662 there were men, likeminded with the two thousand, who did not go out. And it is notorious that in our own day, all parties, to use a now popular phrase, from Romanist to Rationalist, find a home in the Established Church. The explanation of this fact is not far to seek, but I do not discuss it now. It still remains that the Act of 1662 was an Act of Uniformity, and not an Act of Comprehension; that the Church of England has never existed under an Act of Comprehension; and that to-day, as in 1662, she is bound by law to uniformity.

One happy consequence of the policy of the Restoration is the demonstration we find in it of the impolicy and absolute futility of Acts of Uniformity. To make such Acts effectual there must be ignorance and servility on the part of the people, and on the part of the rulers there must be power to stamp out all approaches to free thought. Spain stamped out the Reformation by persistent and unutterable cruelties. But England could not employ the same means, and, if it could, the Nonconformity it had to deal with was too deep and too wide to be even thus destroyed. The land was divided (I recall the phrase) into two nations. One of them was for a time politically "broken and subdued," to use Clarendon's words. But only politically. And even this could not be for ever. The Nonconformist nation, we may venture to say without fear of contradiction, was not only equal but superior to the Conformist nation in religious intelligence and moral principle. And for such a people to be held in subjection as pariahs and outcasts, liable to far worse treatment than hewing wood and drawing water—and that by those who had no better right than their own to the soil and air of England, and who were their brothers in blood—was an impossibility. The issue of the endeavour to reduce them to Uniformity by pains and penalties was to create and give permanency to a Nonconformity which continues unto this day. When John Howe was an exile in Utrecht in 1687, he was visited by Dr. Gilbert Burnet, afterwards Bishop of Sarum, a liberal man, who openly advocated occasional communion with those of different sentiments. Burnet expressed his conviction to Howe that Nonconformity could not last long; that after Baxter, Bates, and Howe were once laid in their graves, it would die of itself. Howe replied that, in his opinion, its existence depended much more on *principles* than on *persons*; that the surest as well as speediest method of destroying Nonconformity

would be to abate the rigour of the terms of Conformity ; and that unless this were done—in other words, so long as ground was left for conscientious Nonconformity—present differences must necessarily be perpetuated. The men might die, but the principles would live. Howe was right. A better example of what is called the irony of events, a better example of a righteous Nemesis in the affairs of nations could not be found than in this, that the Act of Uniformity, triumphantly carried and enforced, was the main cause of the Nonconformity which it was designed to prevent or to crush. Clarendon and Sheldon and the eighteen years' Parliament of Charles II., aimed at compelling all England to be of the Church of England. They only succeeded in alienating, and that for ever, from the Church of England a large portion of the people of these realms.

There is another happy consequence of the policy of the Restoration, and with this I conclude. That which was designed to deprive England of religious liberty—that which did for a time deprive England of religious liberty—has been the very means of its security and permanence. On this subject I content myself with the words of an historian whose endeavour always is to look at matters fairly and broadly. “If the issues of St. Bartholomew's Day,” says Mr. Green, “have been harmful to the spiritual life of the English Church, they have been in the highest degree advantageous to the cause of religious liberty. At the Restoration religious freedom seemed again to have been lost. Only the Independents and a few despised sects, such as the Quakers, upheld the right of every man to worship God according to the bidding of his own conscience. The bulk of the Puritan party, with the Presbyterians at its head, was at one with its opponents in desiring a uniformity of worship, if not of belief, throughout the land. Had the two great parties within the Church

held together, their weight would have been almost irresistible. Fortunately the great severance of St. Bartholomew's Day drove out the Presbyterians from the Church to which they clung, and forced them into a general union with sects which they had hated till then as bitterly as the bishops themselves. A common persecution soon blended the Nonconformists into one. Persecution broke down before the numbers, the wealth, and the political weight of the new sectarians; and the Church, for the first time in its history, found itself confronted with an organized body of Dissenters without its pale. The impossibility of crushing such a body as this wrested from English statesmen the first legal recognition of freedom of worship in the Toleration Act; their rapid growth in later times has by degrees stripped the Church of almost all the exclusive privileges which it enjoyed as a religious body, and now threatens what remains of its official connection with the State."

Thus it is that in England as elsewhere, and in these last days as in the days of old, God maketh the wrath of man to praise Him, while the remainder thereof He restrains. "This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes."

